

# STREAMS IN THE DESERT

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J. H. MORRISON, M.A.

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## STREAMS IN THE DESERT



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MACHILA TEAM AT BANDAWÉ



# STREAMS IN THE DESERT

A PICTURE OF LIFE IN LIVINGSTONIA

BY

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## PREFACE.

THE following chapters are a simple narrative of a long week-end in Central Africa, spent in continuous travelling among the various tribes of Nyasaland and North-Eastern Rhodesia. The story of this long *ulendo*, often told at missionary meetings, has more recently been retold during many happy months of lecturing to the troops in France. The reception accorded to these lectures would seem to justify the hope that the narrative may prove of interest to wider than merely missionary circles. Further, in a time of sudden and kaleidoscopic change, when the remotest regions are in process of transformation, it may be useful to endeavour to fix a picture, though it be but a snapshot, of Central Africa on the eve of the Great War.

I have tried to describe accurately things as I saw them. No apology is offered for the predominance of incident, and of what may be called the fun of the road. The discussion of African problems presents many tempting themes, but it has seemed best to set down in detail such facts as came under one's personal observation and leave them to make their own imprint. The details, if they are not the soul of the picture, at least give it clearness and light and shade.

Contact with the natives in their villages and along their forest paths brought a supreme and

astonishing revelation of the humanness and lovable-ness of the African. Some impression of this it has been my main endeavour to convey to the reader.

I gratefully acknowledge my deep obligation to the Hon. Dr. Laws and others, his colleagues, whose long and intimate knowledge of things African, freely placed at my disposal, enabled me to see and understand much that would otherwise have passed unobserved or remained a sealed book. Especially to Dr. Chisholm of Mwenzo, my companion on many a tangled path and by many a camp-fire in the remotest wilds, I am indebted for such insight as I gained into the inwardness of African village life. For a stranger to travel in these regions, unfamiliar with the language of the people, unacquainted with their individual names and histories, ignorant of what is passing round him—the humour of the carriers, the gossip of the villagers, the meaning of tribal customs—is to travel blind. As well might one imagine that the life of London could be adequately seen from the twopenny tube. If I was in any measure saved from this misfortune it is mainly due to the knowledge and courtesy of my friend the Doctor.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE CHINDÉ MOUTH.

"FOR the convenience of passengers going ashore at Chindé, breakfast will be served at 4.30 A.M." We read the words on the notice-board of the *Llanstephan Castle* as she ploughed her way up the east coast of Africa on the evening of Saturday, the 11th of April, in the year of the Great War. "Convenience" was, of course, the purser's little joke. *He* had no intention of going ashore. Few indeed had. Since rounding the Cape we had touched at every port on the east coast and, for a modest half-crown at the most, we had landed and seen the sights. But Chindé was a different proposition. A fare of £2 10s. to go ashore, with no certainty that the steamer will wait your return, in fact, with the certainty that she will not, is enough to make the most reckless tourist pause, and Chindé remains unvisited.

Nor is Chindé ever likely to emerge from this neglect. On the contrary, a cloud is upon the future. When the Zambesi is bridged and the Nyasaland railway is carried down to Beira, Chindé will be side-tracked. Travellers to the interior will speed up country in luxurious ease, the tedium and sweltering heat of the river voyage will be a thing of the past, and Chindé one of the dead and forgotten places of the earth.

It may not be without interest, therefore, to chronicle the manner of the landing. It amounts to a considerable voyage, for the liner is compelled to lie eight or ten miles off shore on account of the silting of the river. Only at high tide can the tug come out, and even then she is liable to a nasty bump or two on the sandy bar.



4.30 A.M. found us at the breakfast-table with an excellent appetite and a consciousness of great virtue. It lacked an hour and a half of the dawn of Easter morning, and one reflected pleasantly on landing about sunrise. Yes, both the hour and the day were singularly well chosen.

"The tug is not coming out till the afternoon, sir," said the steward, gently breaking the news in the blindest of tones.

Easter thoughts and feelings instantly vanished. A plague on the look-out man, he must have known this an hour ago, before we were wakened. Others of the unfortunate beings, whose convenience had been similarly consulted, were emerging from their cabins. Little Peggy and Margaret were rubbing their sleepy eyes, and baby Tommy, in his mother's arms, was dimly resenting this untimely alarm. The conversation that ensued was singularly copious and appropriate to the occasion.

All through the sultry forenoon the great liner lay rocking idly. About mid-day a German mail boat steamed down from the north and lay to about half a mile away. So this is the reason why the tug did not come out in the morning, for she, too, is German, and a British liner must wait her convenience. By three o'clock in the afternoon the tug is seen rolling across the bar, and when she is laid alongside of us, the ground-swell keeps her tossing like a cork.

From the superior height of the liner's deck we look down on a mountain of luggage, a sprinkling of passengers, and a huge circular basket, three feet in diameter and six in height. After the tug is made fast, a door is opened in the side of the basket, and, one by one, the passengers are seen to scramble in. The door is shut and bolted, the liner's derrick whirrs sharply, and the whole human cargo is hoisted aloft, swung round and dumped on our afterdeck. A quartermaster opens the door of the basket, and its occupants slowly emerge with such dignity as is possible to human beings when called upon to step out of a hamper like poultry on exhibition.

It is now our turn. Friends and fellow-voyagers ac-



company us to the door of the basket, we are packed tightly in, swung out into mid-air, and deposited with a sickening bump on the heaving deck of the tug. Thankful enough are we that it is the deck, for the basket has been known, on occasion, to take a preliminary dip into the sea. We now steam across to the German liner and spend a humiliating hour tossing under her side. Our own boat is hull down on the horizon ere we are clear and turn to the shore.

The tug is a wretched concern, her cabin a filthy hole, littered with bottles and reeking with tobacco and stale beer. We huddle together on deck. At nightfall a chilly breeze springs up, making the boat pitch heavily. Our only deck light is blown out, and we are left in darkness. Every one feels wretched, and the children, sick and weary, begin to cry. As if in Hunnish contempt of human misery, the skipper suddenly starts a dreadful booing with his foghorn. On this, Tommy, poor wee mite, seems to lose all hope, and goes frantic beyond control.

About eight o'clock we came to anchor in the river mouth. A gibbous moon had risen and was gleaming over the river and a few palm trees as we pulled ashore in a rowing boat, whose gunwale seemed only about three inches above the water. As the keel grounded in the slushy sand, some natives stepped forward and took possession of us, uttering the word *Mandala* by way of presenting their credentials as agents of the African Lakes' Corporation. One of them, swinging a lantern, led the way to the boarding-house where we were to spend the night. We waded after him through sand as soft and yielding as newly fallen snow.

Chindé may be described in a word as heat and sand. Here, a score or two of unfortunate exiles swelter in corrugated-iron houses, and sustain their spirits on stone ginger at a shilling a bottle, unless they prefer something stronger and dearer. The place is Portuguese, except twenty-five acres on the river front, which constitute the British concession. The concession is surrounded by a twelve-foot palisade, and the entrance is guarded by

Portuguese sentries to prevent smuggling, but, one fears, with only a doubtful measure of success. Passing the sentries at the gate we found the up-river steamer moored to the bank, and, in a shed near by, our boxes half-buried in the sand. How they had all come safely ashore out of that drunken and chaotic tug is a miracle, explainable only by the fact that the African carrier, both in his pathless forests and on his harbourless coast, can give long odds to the British docker or porter and beat him every time.

Chindé is the last word in excess luggage. Every separate article, before being put on the river steamer, is both weighed and measured by a native clerk. If your belongings are compact and heavy, they are charged by weight; if, on the contrary, they are light and bulky, you have the privilege of paying per cubic foot. But sometimes Greek meets Greek. A veteran doctor from Nyasaland, tamer of the wild Ngoni, who well knew the ways of the river people, was standing with his tirai hat on, keenly watching operations. After every box and bag had been measured, the clerk proceeded to apply his foot-rule to a capacious sun-helmet. It was too much for an Aberdonian.

"I wear that," said the doctor sternly, and seizing the sun-helmet, he clapped it on the top of his hat and passed triumphantly on board the boat.

## CHAPTER II.

### ON THE RIVER.

THE river steamer is of shallow draught, and is propelled by a single paddle-wheel at the stern, where those who do not object to naked publicity can enjoy a rare shower bath. Barges are lashed to the sides of the steamer. In our case we sailed up the river five abreast. By this means the tonnage is spread over a wide expanse of bottom, and, when the barges run aground on sand banks, the steamer remains afloat, and is able to bring them off. The barges are piled high with firewood, upon which the native passengers squat as best they can, with no cover of any kind by day or night. The holds are packed with cargo, except one, which, in our case, was reserved for some members of the *Mbuzi* family, who were making the river trip with us, less for their health than for ours.

*Mbuzi* deserves a sentence. The family is more widely known and esteemed in Central Africa than any other, with the exception of the ubiquitous clan of the *Nkuku*. The day we left Chindé we met the company on their way to the boat, a venerable individual in front, with long sweeping beard, and other members of the family, of more tender years, following.

"You will meet that old fellow again," remarked our pawky friend, Stuart, with grim significance.

So we did. Everything on the barges takes place in the eye of the public, concealment being impossible. Accordingly, next morning the poor old fellow was suddenly assaulted and slain before our very eyes. By dinner-time, he was on the table. After that it was *Mbuzi* in all moods and tenses—boiled and baked, roasted and stewed, curried

and hashed. A few, perhaps, enjoyed it, most of us simply sat it out. Goat's flesh may be highly nutritious, but after what passed on the river may I never see it again.

Of scenery on the lower Zambesi there is none. It is an immense and featureless delta. Two lines of straggling palms on the far horizon mark its boundaries. The country between is dead flat, and covered with elephant grass from eight to twelve feet high. The whole forms a network of streams, islands, and sandbanks, ever shifting and changing, so that the main stream of to-day may become an unvisited backwater to-morrow. The gigantic reeds and grasses on the banks deceive the eye strangely, and make the channel appear much narrower than it really is. Only when a native appears, looking like a pigmy among the grass, is the eye corrected to the true scale and the real distance of the bank appreciated.

The heat is intense. The steamer's deck is covered by a light upper deck, on which the native steersman stands at his wheel, glancing ahead with expert eye, and picking out the channel by the surface colour of the water. The space between decks forms a perfect oven, with the sun beating on the roof and the engine blazing below. Between the two fires the much-enduring passengers are slowly roasted day by day. At night the steamer is tied to the bank, and myriads of mosquitoes swarm on board with murderous intent. But at last a period of delicious respite comes, when, having spread your bed on deck and suspended your mosquito net over it by some cunning arrangement of strings, you creep inside and carefully tuck in the corners of the net. Frail little castle of flimsy network, yet safe as the Tower of London! The enemy rages and storms without. Frontal and flank attack, aeroplane and mine, are alike vain. The noise of battle is delicious music in your drowsy ears and you fall asleep.

The moment of awaking is equally pleasant. The boat is under way, and her motion coaxes the cool night air into a gentle breeze. You turn your head upon your pillow, and watch the soft coming of the dawn. On the barges below dark forms of sleepers begin to appear and then to



stir. Soon the morning is broad awake, and all too quickly leads in another fiery day.

On the third day up the river, the hitherto unbroken flatness gave place to a rising ground on the south bank, towards which we looked with deepest interest. It was Shupanga, that memorable spot where David Livingstone buried his wife, Mary Moffat, and tasted the deepest sorrow of his life. For some of our company the place had deeply affecting associations. Two grandchildren of Livingstone, Dr. Wilson and his sister, were on board, both of whom were on their way to the far interior to take up their grandfather's work among the people where he died. Together we visited the grave.

Overlooking the river, about a hundred yards up the slope, stands the house, a long, plain, substantial building, once a Portuguese residence, now occupied by a Jesuit mission. In appearance it curiously resembles a Scotch farm steading, a resemblance which is increased by a low archway in the centre, wide enough to admit a cart. The room immediately to the left of this archway is the one in which Mrs. Livingstone died, "at the close of a long, clear, hot day, the last Sabbath of April, 1862". The graveyard lies to the east of the house. It occupies a space of from twenty to thirty yards square, and is roughly enclosed by a cactus hedge. Mrs. Livingstone's grave is in the centre, under a shady tree. It is covered by a massive block of cement, while an upright headstone carries a double inscription, in English on the one side and in Portuguese on the other. Six other graves are grouped around, only one of which is English. The site, though only of moderate elevation, commands a wide view over the river and the plain northward to the Shiré Highlands. In the southern hemisphere, the north is, of course, the sunny exposure, and one remarked on the minute accuracy of the great explorer who wrote, years after in his last journal, of his poor Mary lying "on Shupanga brae that beeks forenent the sun".

Next day we turned north into the Shiré and began to draw towards the hills. The massive, lion-like form of Morumbala Mountain rose bold and solitary from the plain.

As the river wound round its base and along its side one was reminded, though on a far grander scale, of the scene where "Gaudie rins at the back o' Bennachie". The country round, like the whole Zambesi basin, must be in the rainy season a gigantic, steaming marsh, and desperately unhealthy.

At this point we set on shore a wandering Scot whom we had picked up near Shupanga. He professed to have come through the Amatongas Forest from Rhodesia, had lost all his belongings in crossing a river, and, on reaching the Zambesi in rags, had been fitted by some planter with white flannels of antique cut. After a shave with a borrowed razor and a wash up he appeared an uncommonly intelligent and interesting fellow. He had gone out to the Boer War and roamed through Africa ever since. He was quite at home on the Zambesi, knew all the sugar plantations on the river, and spun endless yarns about old Reposa and Donna Maria. With these he mingled curious inquiries about his native county of Banff. As he stepped ashore he presented an extraordinary figure, dressed like a cricketer of the early nineties, and starting off serenely for some destination known only to himself, in an apparently uninhabited country with all his earthly belongings in a small paper parcel under his arm. A typical rolling stone, one has often wondered what became of him. Doubtless the call of the Great War would reach him in the wilds, and he would roll into the firing line somewhere for the glory of the old Empire.

The comparative narrowness of the Shiré brought the steamer nearer the banks which rose steeply on either hand to about the height of our upper deck. Villages straggled along the level top of the bank with here and there a few banana trees. Out of these villages the naked urchins rushed as the steamer passed, and pursued a parallel course along the bank with shouts of "Botelle, Botelle". How natural and boylike it was! One instantly thought of the village boys in Scotland pursuing the passing picnic with their equally urgent cry of "Pour oot". The skipper obligingly gathered a few empty bottles and pitched them

one by one into midstream. Down the bank headlong came the boys like a pack of hounds and plunged into the water with a resounding splash. Not a care had they for the crocodiles that swarm in the river. Probably, amid the din and the splashing, they were safe enough, for the crocodile is a cowardly brute. Some there were, however, who ran and shouted among the foremost, but who never ventured to make the plunge. Timid souls, never likely to win a prize in life—not even an empty bottle!

The yellow, muddy water of the river still showed traces of the recent great flood, when a cloud-burst among the mountains had washed out the Shiré Highlands Railway and carried destruction and death down the valleys. Some villages had plainly been submerged and were beginning to be repaired. Traces of the wreckage were still being carried down the river. A dark brown object came floating sullenly past. That it was a body there could be no doubt, for the outline of the ribs was plainly visible. A remark was made as to whether the body was that of a native or of a dog. Four gay young spirits, such as Britain has too often sent out to exploit the lower races of the earth, were at the moment busy playing poker. One of them, overhearing the remark, turned half round:—

“A nigger or a dog?” he jerked out over his shoulder. “Well, demmit, what’s the difference?” And he planked down another card.

Missionaries of Empire! Apostles of Civilisation! Alas for the land that sends you out, and, yet again, alas for yourselves who are sent!

## CHAPTER III.

### THE BREATH OF THE BLUE GUMS.

THE Shiré River, after oozing out of the south end of Lake Nyasa and floating sluggishly past Liwondé, begins to thread the glens of the Shiré Highlands. Gathering strength and volume from the surrounding hills, it roars down through seventy miles of cataract to the great plain of the Zambesi. A complete barrier to navigation is thus interposed between the Lake and the lower river, and one of the finest waterways into the heart of Africa is cut in two. By way of compensation, however, the Shiré Highlands afford a healthy region of rare beauty which has now become the centre of commerce and government for all Nyasaland.

The first steamer ever launched on an African lake was carried through these hills by the invincible energy of a handful of Scots missionaries. It is a heroic story that bears retelling. Sent out from Scotland in 1875 to found a mission in memory of Livingstone, whose death the previous year had thrilled and awakened Christendom, Dr. Laws and his comrades were put ashore at the Zambesi mouth with the component parts of their little steamer, the *Ilala*. They set to work to put her together, found the bolts a mass of rust, sat down and patiently scoured them clean, then built and launched the boat. Up the Zambesi and the Shiré they steamed, feeling their way, cutting their way. At the Elephant Marsh, beside Morumbala, it was terrible work clearing a channel through the sudd. "Hand me another glass of Shiré," panted the funny man, licking his baked lips.

A feeble jest, perhaps, but notable enough in the circumstances, and recalled with a smile forty years after by



the last of the veterans, as he spoke of the grand old toilsome, killing days. At the barrier of the hills they were held up. The seventy miles of cataract were not in the programme, but Scots grit put it through. A thousand carriers were assembled, the steamer was unloaded, taken to pieces, and carried over the hills to the upper river. In a few weeks more the *Ilala* was ploughing the virgin waters of the lake, a herald of Christian civilisation and the seal of the slave-raider's doom.

The river voyage to-day ends at Port Herald, the port of entry to Nyasaland. A post office and custom house, a railway station and some houses scattered among the trees, with a fine background of steep, wooded hills, such is Port Herald—pretty enough, but sodden with the heat of the river and tortured with its insect life. There are said to be 150 species of mosquito, and probably they can all be found at Port Herald. On the last night we spent on board the boat these Huns of the air came in swarms from the bank as if knowing that their time was short. With the mosquitoes came venomous hippo flies, like bluebottles, and ponderous flying beetles, with the lumbering gait of lorry horses—a veritable Egyptian plague which made eating a disgust and rest impossible.

Next morning by seven o'clock we were aboard the train for Blantyre. The Shiré Highlands Railway has opened a path into the heart of the hills. In its hundred odd miles of length it climbs up 3000 feet from the sweltering flat to a place of cool, clear air and fresh mountain breezes. The scenery on the way reminds one of the Scottish Highlands. It is remarkable how homelike is the general aspect of the forest. There are the same shades of green, and apparently the same species of trees. Only when one fixes on a particular tree one perceives it is neither oak nor elm nor ash, but something with a puzzling resemblance to them all. Looking casually at the undergrowth one would say, "This is rough Scottish woodland with coarse grass and brambles, wild raspberries and dog-roses". An occasional grove of bamboos or a few bananas hardly alter the impression. The vague popular idea that

tropical countries grow little else but palms is a complete mistake. In Central Africa the palm is so rare as to be quite conspicuous when met with.

After ten hours of climbing—so slow at times that the native guard leaned out of the van and talked with his friends in passing—we came out on the uplands. Away to the east Mlanjé Mountain towered up to a height of 10,000 feet. In every fold and hollow of the hills plantations of cotton and tobacco, with some rubber trees, were to be seen, clearings hacked out of the primeval tangle, and only defended from its encroachment by the incessant labour of the hoe.

Blantyre is buried among trees and everywhere the place is fragrant with the breath of the blue gums. The moment you step out of the railway carriage it comes floating round you like spices from heaven's own garden. At the first whiff the nostrils dilate, the lungs expand and gasp for more. You can think of nothing but to stand and draw in long, deep, satisfying breaths till every tissue is bathed and saturated in the balmy air. If there be any truth in Kipling's assertion that foreign places are chiefly remembered by their smell, then must the memory of Blantyre be to every traveller unfading and divine. Seated that evening on the veranda of the boarding house, which looks across the fragrant woods out of which peeped the roofs of bungalows, and away to the distant hills behind which the sun was setting, as one gratefully drank in the coolness of the breeze after the fiery furnace of the river, one felt a dreamy, delicious sense as of Paradise Regained.

Blantyre was born, christened and nurtured under the auspices of Church of Scotland missionaries. When the pioneers of the *Ilala* established themselves farther north on Lake Nyasa, the Church of Scotland men who accompanied them chose this site in the Shiré Highlands and named it after Livingstone's birthplace. Subsequent events have confirmed the wisdom of the choice, for Blantyre to-day is the commercial centre of Nyasaland. In the wild, unsettled period before the coming of the British Government, the Mission virtually ruled the district, a position

which was not without its perils. Now, however, under a stable government, the Mission reaps the fruit of forty years of strenuous and devoted labour, and stands out as the greatest Christian and civilising agency in South Nyasaland.

The Mission is approached from the railway station by an avenue which winds up for a mile or so through a plantation of blue gums. At the head of the avenue stands the church, a perfect gem of architecture and one of the seven wonders of Africa. It was designed by the genius of Dr. Clement Scott, and built of sun-dried brick by natives under his supervision. A curious and beautiful effect is produced by these hand-moulded bricks. They have nothing in common with the precise, angular, raw-edged, machine-made, thirty-shillings-a-thousand type of brick. They bear, unashamed, the mark of the handicraftsman; they take kindly to one another, and cling together in the most natural way. The effect is to give the building an antique appearance, as if it had been built 500 years ago, and been weathered by centuries of summer sun and winter frost. So perfect are the proportions that one is deceived as to the size. A photograph—and no African building has been more frequently photographed—gives the impression of a cathedral; in reality the building is quite small, too small, in fact, for the needs of the Mission. The aisles are but a yard in width, the nave has room only for four or five chairs on either side of a wide, middle passage. Yet one would wish nothing different. To alter or to add would be desecration.

In the front of the church a brass tablet is inserted, recording the fact that here a certain industrious consul of Zanzibar, by 365 observations of the stars, established the fact that Blantyre is 2 hours 20 minutes 13 seconds east of Greenwich. Well, some people do love to make their position clear.

Around and behind the church are grouped all the buildings necessary to a first-class Mission—school, hospital and workshops, all in excellent condition and humming with life. Carpentry and cabinet-making, printing and tailoring are taught to the boys; dressmaking and needlework to the girls. All the linen of the planters for miles round is

dressed at the laundry. The experimental garden is under the care of a Scots gardener. But it is superfluous to remark on the nationality of the gardener where every one is a Scot and everywhere are evidences of Scottish thoroughness. Dr. Hetherwick, the head of the Mission, the pawkiest of Aberdonians, dispenses a genial hospitality in his study, where he sits among his books with no ceiling over him but the rough-hewn rafters and the bare thatch. Even the planter who loves the Mission least has nothing but praise for the Doctor.

The name of Blantyre is a credential in Central Africa which will carry a boy far. Travelling in Rhodesia, a thousand miles from the lake, one heard the name of Blantyre on the lips of those who could not tell where Blantyre was, nor cared to know. Only, to them, a Blantyre boy was a good boy and in great demand.

It was Saturday night when we reached Blantyre, and the Sunday morning native service was an experience to remember and give thanks for. The breath of the blue gums imparted an indescribable fragrance to the air as we walked up the avenue. It was a perfect Sabbath morning. A well-clad, reverent congregation filled the church. Everything in the service was unfamiliar save the hymns. These, being for the most part translations of the finest English hymns and sung to the same tunes, grip the heart strangely. Moreover, as the native languages are written phonetically and according to classical pronunciation, one can join in the singing with little difficulty. When the first notes of the opening hymn swelled out and were recognised, there came an instant and overwhelming sense of Christian brotherhood and of the unity of the faith. One, at least, of that audience will never forget that the first hymn in which he joined with the children of darkest Africa, was the sublime prayer :—

Thou whose almighty word  
Chaos and darkness heard,  
And took their flight,  
Hear us we humbly pray,  
And where the Gospel day  
Sheds not its glorious ray  
Let there be light.



Nor will he forget how a woman's voice rose sweet and clear as if thrilling with the joy of emancipated womanhood.

In the evening a service was held for Europeans, but the audience was sadly different. Less than a score were present, besides the members of the staff. The good Doctor, in his abounding charity, excused the meagre attendance. There was a cricket-match on at Zomba. And for this the children of the Kingdom despise their birthright! It was the first of many similar, heartbreaking scenes that one witnessed in Africa, at the mines and in the towns where black and white meet—native churches filled with eager, reverent worshippers, while the white man is absorbed in his Sunday golf and cricket. Yet some of these men would claim the Christian heritage as a national possession and deny with an oath the black man's right to share it.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE MANDALA EXPRESS.

ONE has often regretted the passing of the old stage-coach. Travel in those days may have been less swift and luxurious, but surely it was far more picturesque and exhilarating. Smoke and cinders, tunnels and cuttings, are but poor substitutes for the crack of the whip, the music of the horn, and the sound of the horses' hoofs ringing on the hard road. Yet the stage-coach in the height of its glory must have been a tame affair in comparison to the riotous onrush of the Mandala express.

Mandala, properly the African Lakes' Corporation, is the universal provider and carrier, banker and agent in Central Africa. The name, Mandala, means spectacles, the said spectacles having been worn by one of the heroic and indomitable brothers Moir, who looked through them so forcefully that they became to the native mind the symbol of all authority. A Glasgow commercial company, formed for the development of the country by friends of the Livingstonia Mission, Mandala is a true child of the typical Scottish business man whose head is in the right place as well as his heart, and who holds with a firm grip the national faith that sound business and true religion need never be divorced. What the result has been in this case may be variously estimated.

"Ye maun either be a Mandala man *or* a Christian," said a vexed employee cynically. "Ye canna be baith."

But such a verdict, if taken seriously, would be far from just. Mandala is simply Glasgow in Nyasaland, with all its push and go, tact and integrity. In the old days, under the brilliant leadership of John and Fred Moir, it fought the

slave-raider and held open the door into the interior. Its trade preceded, instead of following, the flag, and to-day it is a power in Nyasaland second only to the Government. Having passed through the hands of its agents from Chindé to Karonga, and from Mwenzo to Broken Hill, in steamers, stores, and rest-houses, I gratefully put on record that a finer set of fellows I never wish to meet.

Between Blantyre and Fort Johnstone, at the south end of Lake Nyasa, there is a gap of 120 miles where neither rail nor river is available for transport. Here Mandala comes in to bridge the gap, and handles all the up-country traffic by carrier. A carrier's load is something under three-quarters of a hundredweight. The man carries his own food in addition, travels at his own pace, sleeps where he will at the roadside, and is expected to make the journey inside a week. Along the same route runs the Mandala express, owning no time-table but sending specials as required.

After a day spent in the great Mandala store, buying pots and pans and all the necessities of camp life, we were ready for the road. The mode of travel is by garetta, a rough, strongly-built rickshaw, the tyres of the wheels being protected by strips of raw hide which, in the heat of the day, add their own perfume to the sultry air. A native pulls in the shafts and four others push behind, while three or four spare men complete the team, which is under the charge of a capitao. The men are naked except for coloured cotton loincloths, dark blue Turkish caps, and rings of little bells strapped round the right leg below the knee.

Two garettas sufficed for our party. In the first sat a lady of slender build, whose team looked as if they had a soft job; the second carried a double load, consisting of the writer and a stalwart New Zealander whose weight imperilled the groaning springs. The passengers aboard and the team into harness, so to speak, the capitao blows a policeman's whistle furiously and away we go. From the start we realise that we are in for the most amazing and delirious experience. The team are as wild as a set of schoolboys broken loose for the holidays. They hoot like a motor,

puff like a train, bark, yell, roar, grunt. "Mandala, Mandala, toot-toot-toot, zamé-zamé-zamé-za, ugh-ugh-ugh, yelp-yelp-yelp." The runners behind stamp vigorously with their right feet and chant to the rhythmic jingle of the bells. The spare members of the team bound alongside like dogs off the leash. It is the maddest rout ever seen.

The road to Zomba, the only macadamised road in Central Africa, is about equal to a rough, Highland road at home, and we bowl along it in fine style. We sweep through the hills, run into a Scotch mist and out again, then gloriously down a long brae with the fury of a tornado. The special delight of the team is to charge down upon everything native and scatter it into the grass. No road-hog ever careered with such reckless joy and terror through quiet lanes and sleepy villages.

As the day grows hotter the team slackens somewhat in their pace, slowing down occasionally to a walk, but still running miles at a stretch, and the ceaseless tinkle of the bells mingles now with short, quick, gasping breaths. It becomes a fascination to watch and listen. I close my eyes and still see the bronze backs and heaving shoulders gleaming and steaming in the sun. I hear the hoarse panting of the pack at my ear and the rhythmic stamp of the jingling feet. It is weird as a scene from dreamland. Now a pinch of snuff is handed round without any pause in the running, and each man in turn steps aside a moment to sniff it up. A native passing with corn cobs hands over two or three. The runners, indeed, seem to snatch them from him with hardly a "by your leave". They share them round amicably, but there is no stop.

Meantime we have caught up on two carriers, who, with ten minutes' start of the garetas, have been tearing along in front, one with a big suit-case, the other with a Gladstone bag. One of these men is the proud possessor of an old print dress which flutters ridiculously round his ankles as he runs. But Mary Ann, as we dub him, for all his frivolous appearance, has some grit. We are twelve or fifteen miles out before we come in sight of him, and five miles more ere we catch him up. He pegs along tirelessly with a bag I



should not care to carry half a mile, and a goatskin of meal tied to it. Never once does he stop or put it down, but shifts it from shoulder to head, from head to shoulder as he runs.

Twenty-five miles out a halt is made for lunch at a lonely rest-house in the forest, which, being but rarely opened, smells musty as a long-deserted barn. Mandala, however, has been there before us and deposited sundry tins of preserved fruit, so we lunch royally. The runners boil for themselves a pot of maize porridge, and in an hour we are on the road again. The team have no sort of judgment in their going. Once on the run they keep on, up hill and down dale. Often when we would have got out to walk, the garetta in front tore on uphill, and, for the comfort of the lady's nerves, we had perforce to follow. At every pool, no matter how muddy, some of the men paused a moment to drink. At one of these wayside pools we suddenly came on a native bathing. He had laid aside his loincloth and was dabbling about in three inches of water, much like a sparrow in a puddle. The bather, in utter confusion at the sight of white faces, rose from the pool and stood at attention. Now, it must not be supposed that though natives wear little, they count that little of no importance. On the contrary they regard their meagre rag as simply vital. Our team were unspeakably scandalised. Without a word of parley three of them leaped on the offending bather and crumpled him down into the mud, where he crouched abjectly till we passed.

Late in the afternoon we swung round the shoulder of a hill, and "Zomba!" cried the capitao, pointing across the valley.

"Zomba, Zomba, ha-ha-ha, yelp-yelp-yelp," answered the pack.

A big, blue mountain appeared in front, with woods along its base and red roofs dotting the lower slopes. Down the hill we swept and across the bridge. A short, stiff climb up, and then a last triumphant rush down an avenue of blue gums, past the tennis-green where gaily-dressed ladies were playing tennis, and up to the boarding-house with a final flourish.

Well done, Mandala! Forty-two miles in eight hours, with bare feet over a stony road, and energy enough blown off in steam to have gone as far again.

Time did not permit me to do justice to Zomba, much as my curiosity had been aroused in regard to that remarkable place. Some time before our visit, an imaginative traveller, having penetrated thus far into the wilds, returned to civilisation with strange tales of a Governor's Council where pompous majors strut and pose, while missionaries of fabulous age and wisdom sit stroking their snow-white beards. This effusion, when reported in Zomba, generated enough heat to keep the luckless Mission in warm water for a twelvemonth. Happily, the truth is that in few countries are Government and Mission on more cordial terms.

Next morning our team came up as fresh as paint, and we set off again while the mist hung low on Zomba mountain. A continuance of yesterday's pace was not to be looked for. After Zomba the road is execrable, except where there is no road to execrate. It was pull and push, hoist and heave, and bring her through by main strength. In two and a half days they brought us through to Fort Johnston, a really great achievement. A relief team came out to meet us under a capitao who had once possessed a cotton shirt, the yoke of which with a few dependent ribbons still adorned his shoulders. They were a poor team but a lusty choir, so we agreed to call it a concert and sat it out.

All along the way we had passed the heavy goods carriers plodding on, some with cruelly hard and angular boxes on their bare shoulders, some in pairs with a bulky case or package slung between them on a pole. It seems a mad thing to send a native off on his own into the wilds with a load that to him would be a fortune, yet sooner or later they all arrive.

"Oh, yes, goods get lost, but always below Blantyre," said the agent at Fort Johnston. "We despatch and receive ten to twenty thousand loads per annum, and, in my time, only one has gone amissing." It was a great testimonial to native fidelity.

There is a near prospect, one hears, of the railway going through to Fort Johnston. It is the inevitable, in Africa as elsewhere. Perhaps the day is coming when all our modes of travel will be so completely perfected and standardised that it will not be worth while to stir from home. Be that as it may, the world will be less picturesque, less rich in possibilities of glorious experience, on the day when the Mandala express has ceased to run.

## CHAPTER V.

### FROM THE DECK OF THE *QUEEN*.

THE builders of Fort Johnston had big ideas. They dreamed of their city as the Chicago of Lake Nyasa. So they ran up a main street from the river with 90 feet of roadway in the centre, flanked on either side by two rows of trees and double sidewalks, making a total width of 150 feet. Ample side streets were laid out in similar fashion at right angles. Bungalows were built, embowered in trees, a handsome Jubilee memorial was erected to Queen Victoria at the foot of the main street, and Fort Johnston prepared to expand and flourish.

But alas for human dreams and plans ! The level of the lake fell 15 feet, the river degenerated into a stagnant marsh, so that the lake steamer could not come within five miles of the town, and Fort Johnston became a city of vacant avenues and deserted bungalows. A mere handful of Government officials and Mandala men remained to keep life in the place. Whether the railway, when it comes, will revive the town or pass it by is as yet undetermined.

Still there are worse places to spend a week-end in than the Mandala boarding-house at the fort. Delicious fish, fresh from the lake, unlimited lime juice, pressed from golden lemons falling to the ground in bushels, an airy veranda to lounge in, overlooking the river and the rocky, wooded hills beyond, constitute the nearest approach to a hydropathic that one can hope to strike in the region of the great lakes.

Three miles beyond Fort Johnston is Mponda's, once the stronghold of a troublesome, slave-raiding chief, whom the fort was built to overawe, now a mission station of the Uni-

versities' Mission. Here I parted from my stalwart New Zealander with some reluctance, I confess, for he seemed not at all the stuff of which pale ritualists are made. We joined at evensong in chanting the "Magnificat" in Yao as best we could, but as we strove to follow the service, the elaborate ritual of which was only half-intelligible to us, we could not help wondering what the handful of natives behind us were making of it. Beneath the priestly robes of the ministrants one knew there were two fine, companionable fellows clad in the briefest of white duck shorts, and there seemed no reason why they should not be as natural in divine worship as they had been an hour before in human intercourse. After the benediction the chanting died away in the vestry, and one rose saddened that such mysterious formalities should be thrust in, as it seemed unnecessarily, between a primitive people and their God.

At the head of the river, 5 miles above the fort, the lake steamer lay waiting us. We embarked in a houseboat, and after being towed by a little launch as far as the clear water went, we were punted along by six boatmen with long bamboo poles. Here the river bed is a mass of floating sudd, firmly interlaced, through which a narrow channel is with difficulty kept open to the lake. Through this channel we slowly moved to the music of the boatmen's chant and the drip of the poles.

At the end of the channel appeared a vast expanse of deep blue water. A furlong from the shore two little steamers were anchored side by side. Memorable and historic vessels both! One was the *Queen Victoria*, of which more anon. The other was the *Gwendolen*, or *Gwen* for short, an insignificant but not unworthy part of the British Navy. Ere long she was destined, in the great war, to make her own little bit of history.

A learned professor, discussing some years ago the dire effects of a European war on the lower races, drew a tragic picture of a fratricidal combat on Lake Nyasa between the German and British gunboats, while crowds of astonished heathen lined the shore. It did not happen as predicted. A message tingled up the wire to the lake, the commander



of the *Gwen* dashed out, caught the Germans napping at New Langenburg, politely informed them of certain important changes in Europe, and invited them to accept of British hospitality.

Livingstone, who discovered Lake Nyasa, took it to be 100 miles in length; the pioneers of the *Ilala* found its length to be 350 miles with an average breadth of 40. It is in reality a gigantic trench running north and south among the mountains. Its surface is 1500 feet above sea-level, and the mountains on either side rise to heights varying from 5000 to 10,000 feet. A triangular promontory splits the south end of the lake into two arms, up the easternmost of which we now sailed in the *Queen*. Near Cape Maclear we put in for the night at Monkey Bay, a lovely spot, completely land-locked and surrounded by steep, wooded hills on which troops of great baboons leaped and barked. On the rocks around the bay monstrous crocodiles lay basking in the evening sun. At the blast of the steamer's whistle they sliddered down loathsomely into the water.

Next day, as we zigzagged across the lake, first to the east side at Mtengula and then to the west at Kotakota, we had full experience of the powers and qualities of the *Queen*. Like another and more famous lake in Galilee, which also lies deep among the hills, Lake Nyasa is liable to sudden storms through the downward sweep of the winds, and the *Queen* seems constructed to make the most of them. She will execute more squeamish manœuvres in five minutes than any respectable boat would go through in an hour. The proud voyager over 3000 leagues of ocean is laid low, and that on a mere inland lake. In this painful and humiliating moment, the skipper, most obliging of mortals, comes to the rescue. He also bites the deck, so to speak, and puts us again in countenance. At once the whole wretched affair takes on the hue of a grand adventure, and we fancy ourselves telling the tale in after days. "Never was such a tossing! Even the captain himself was dead sick."

Cockroaches of amazing agility riot through the cabins, startled by the intrusion of a passenger. Sleep anywhere

but on deck is only to be thought of with a shudder. Not that there is danger of bloodshed, the enemy's taste fortunately lying in the direction of bootleather and hats, but what bed-fellows! A seasoned traveller, with nerves attuned to snakes and all manner of tropical creeping things, confessed in the morning that he had been somewhat mobbed, that his nose, in fact, a somewhat prominent member, had been all night long the centre of a delirious merry-go-round. Had Dante lived in the age of Kultur he might well have fixed the lowest gulf of his Inferno in the cabin of the *Queen*, and there, among the cockroaches, have imprisoned the Lord of all the Huns, and doomed him, like the *Flying Dutchman*, to toss for ever on the restless bosom of the lake.

Half-way up the western shore of the Lake Nyasa, the hills sweep back in a semi-circle, leaving a wide flat which is the home of the Atonga. A short spit of land juts out into the water, ending in a blunt, rocky headland. A line of buildings appears on the summit of the ridge. Here, at Bandawé, is the mother station of the Livingstonia Mission, for the original settlement at Cape Maclear had soon to be abandoned, when its deadly climate began to take a heavy toll of precious lives.

Livingstone, when he first explored the lake, landed on the sandy beach at Bandawé, and natives are still alive who remember seeing him. At the time of the Livingstone centenary, a meeting was held near the spot. It was a changed scene, for first the Gospel and then the British Government had come, and worked wonders in the land. Thousands of the people now shared the great explorer's faith. Him they called *Chiswa-msangu*, the Channel-cutter, a name they give to the first rains which clear the water-courses for the floods that follow. At the meeting the old men told their reminiscences, how when he washed his head and face with soap, and the white lather filled his hair, they cried in horror, "The white spirit is taking his brains out," and fled to the bush. The house rocked with laughter at the simplicity of the fathers. Then old Vyamba, in more serious vein, witnessed to the glorious

transformation of their blood-stained country. He told how, when the Mission came, Dr. Laws had said, "Yes, war is thick enough about you, but it will not last for ever. Pray to God about it, and see what happens."

"The white man lies," we said.

"No," said the Doctor, "it is not lies."

"And now," concluded Vyamba, with a thrill that went through his audience, "look at us to-day. My heart warms. Jesus has been the life of us."

But there is ever a fly in the ointment for those who care to look for it. Livingstone records to the credit of the people that, having left some of his goods at Bandawé, he found them all safe on his return. This fact being mentioned by way of compliment, one dusky old lady was not a little nettled. With a toss of her head she inquired indignantly, "And who did he think would have stolen them?"



## CHAPTER VI.

### LAKE SHORE FOLKS.

THE Scots mission at Bandawé is the centre of the life of the Atonga. Less than half a century ago the dwellers on the lake shore were on the brink of extermination in consequence of the bloody raids of the hillmen. Then it was that the Mission, planted in the nick of time, became their city of refuge. As an old man said, "We hoed our gardens in the strength of Dr. Laws".

The Mission buildings are unpretentious in the extreme. A *mseu*, or hoed road, runs up from the bay through a grove of trees. On reaching the summit of the ridge, it passes along a line of low, brick buildings, dignified by the names of the hospital, school, doctor's house, office, and residence of the ordained missionary. Facing these are the church and the boys' boarding-house.

The boarder boys are a lively lot, and "a handful," as the Scots say, to those in charge of them. A visitor was rash enough, after the first Sunday service, to praise the heartiness of their singing, omitting all reference to its flatness, whereupon they retired with delighted grins, and spent the rest of the day in roaring their way clear through the hymn-book. It was a memorable experience when the sound of the bagpipes fell for the first time on their astonished ears. Dr. Wilson, improving on the methods of his illustrious grandfather, had brought out his bagpipes, as well as his Bible and medicine chest. One evening, soon after our arrival, he went out into the moonlight and began to tune up. It was the first time the drone of the pipes had ever been heard in these parts. The boarder boys came tumbling out like Tam o' Shanter's witches.

"*Chikoko*, it's a wild beast!" exclaimed a teacher who was standing near, and the boys vanished quicker than they had come. In a little while they were reassured, and came out again. They pressed as close about the piper as did the children of Hamelin, and with open mouths drank in the strains. As their enthusiasm rose, one rushed off for a native drum on which he hammered vigorously by way of accompaniment. It was the one touch needed to complete the harmony. Those who cannot take the bagpipes raw are recommended to try them mixed with the rumble of an African drum.

No impression of Bandawé would be complete without a visit to the little graveyard below the station. Deeply overshadowed in the grove that runs down to the lake is a double row of graves of missionaries, with some others, all of whom died young. There sleep Bain and Sutherland, the latter buried at midnight in a grave into which the loose sand continually subsided. Next morning Dr. Elmslie, seventy miles off in the hills, waking from a dream, said, "Sutherland is dead, and buried in a grave with the sand slipping in on both sides". So tense was the feeling in those early days, and so mysterious the sympathy among the little band of pioneers, isolated in the heart of heathenism. There, too, is the grave of wee Donald McMinn, a true missionary, doubtless heaven-sent on some bright errand of his own, fulfilled in three short months, and now he sleeps beside his mother. They all died young, and, in dying, laid a deep and enduring foundation for other hands to build on.

It was Saturday when we reached Bandawé, and next day one had the novel experience, often repeated afterwards, of addressing a native congregation through an interpreter. It is at first disconcerting to pause at the end of every sentence, listen to another man uttering a jargon of sound, and be ready when he stops to continue one's discourse. In time it comes easier, and probably the translator has always the worst of it.

The church is an exceedingly plain, square, low-roofed brick building with a short tower in front, which is the

haunt of innumerable bats. Inside the church there are no pews, but the floor rises gently towards the three sides in the fashion of an amphitheatre, by successive tiers of brick. On these low galleries the congregation sit, the men to the right, the women to the left, the boarder boys in front and the mothers with babies at the back. The pulpit is a solid square rostrum of brick, with no railing or adornment of any kind beyond a table and chair. The praise is led by a native precentor with the aid of a small organ. The women, to all appearance, are the most backward portion of the audience. Many of the hymns they are unable to join in, but when an old favourite comes they make ample amends for their previous silence. Their singing would delight an Auld Licht congregation by its patriarchal slowness. The precentor beats time with exaggerated energy, the men shout and glare scornfully across the church, but the women, having found a good thing, have no notion of letting it go. Thoroughly enjoying themselves, and unconscious of any fault, they hold on lovingly to each note, and after the men have finished the verse, they come leisurely wandering along the last line.

In the afternoon we walked a mile down the lake shore, through loose, burning sand and clumps of long grass, to a populous village where a service was held in the open air. Several hundred people gathered in a clearing under some shady trees. On the speaker's right sat the chief in a deck-chair, while near him a group of the village fathers squatted around his uncle, a picturesque old heathen in a red Turkish cap and a faded Paisley shawl. The chief, a fine-looking young fellow, led in the opening prayer, a junior missionary gave a brief address, evidently in a somewhat limited vocabulary, and then his senior colleague set to work. For a good half-hour on that stifling afternoon he discoursed with all the volubility and gesture of a native, pacing to and fro in the centre of the clearing, and throwing his sentences to this side and that. He halted in front of the elders squatting on the ground, bent forward till his face was on a level with theirs, and hurled his words at them.

"In the old war days, when danger threatened, where

did you go?" He paused, waiting a reply. "Did you stay outside the stockade?"

"Ee-ai," exclaimed one of the old men with earnestness. The word had a ridiculously familiar sound, but on the lips of an African it is an emphatic negative.

The speaker poured on again, urging his hearers to seek a refuge for their souls in God. The sermon ended, the preacher called on an old woman to lead the congregation in prayer. She rose from the middle of the women's group on the left, a thin and withered form, clad in a single strip of calico, covered her eyes with her left hand, laid her right arm across her shrunken breast and prayed with quiet reverence and decorum.

As we sauntered home in the cool of the evening we were surrounded and followed by excited groups of youngsters, eager to inspect the white strangers, but at last, near the Mission station, they were dispersed by a sudden, good-humoured charge of the boarder boys who resented this invasion of their domain. A quiet hour in the house with a little company, thankful to worship God in their own tongue, and drawn heart to heart by a sense of exile, closed the day.

Meantime the activities of the Bandawé Church had extended to 120 villages of the Atonga, where services were conducted by native elders and preachers. Every month the worthy session clerk, Sam Kauti, draws up his programme, covering ten or twelve districts of a dozen villages or thereby, for each of which he must provide a weekly preacher. The work of this one station is a great organisation which few session clerks at home would care to undertake, and fewer congregations would have the resources to carry on. But Sam is one of those fine fellows, sensible, straight, and steadfast, whom one had the pleasure of meeting at various Mission centres—men who are the missionary's right hand, true pillars of the kirk and leaders of their people. Said a man who had lived twenty years among the Atonga and was leaving them with a heavy heart, "Go where I will, I shall never find, in all the world, another friend like Sam".



The lake shore folks are a branch of the great Bantu family which, though far scattered in Africa from the Cape to the Equator, still retain, throughout all their various tribes and dialects, a strong family resemblance in language and custom. Their skin is not black, but copper-coloured, and there is a pleasing variety of feature. The typical picture of the negro with thick lips and flat nose is as great a caricature of the African as the typical John Bull is of the Englishman, or red-haired Sandy of the Scot. Many of the children and young people, with their shapely heads, their finely moulded arms and shoulders, and their soft, glossy skin, are distinctly attractive in appearance.

Among the women bracelets and anklets of brass and copper wire are commonly worn, while the upper lip, the ears, and the left nostril are pierced to admit ornaments, sometimes of prodigious size and weight. Every variety of dress is to be seen, from the scanty garb of the Wankondé at the north end of the lake, whose women wear a mere loin cloth, to the gay attire of the girls in the mining towns of Rhodesia, all complete from glaring yellow shoes to gorgeous picture hat. The Atonga women affect a medium style, their dress consisting of two yards of calico wound round the body from under the armpits to below the knee, and tied in a knot over the breasts. This knot they continually tighten and rearrange, with the same feminine instinct that prompts the graceful little pats and touches of their more elegant sisters at home. In Bandawé the young girls were flaunting, as the very latest fashion, a red calico sash with a white cross in the middle of the back.

So much has been written by fastidious whites about the offensive odour of the African, that one may perhaps be pardoned a word on an unsavoury subject. I have travelled many a hot day in the line of carriers, sat with them round the camp fire, slept with them twelve in a hut, and have found the odour often imperceptible and never unbearable. There is, moreover, another side to the question which is rarely alluded to. Bishop Butler warns us that we differ from other people as much as they differ from us, and the



truth has an application which the learned Bishop little dreamed of. To be plain, the fastidious white man is as offensively odorous to the nostrils of the native as the native is to the white. "Ugh!" they say in the village, when the house-boy comes home, "you smell of the *Mzungu* (white man)." It is the old story of the kettle and the pot.

The lake shore people are scrupulous about their morning bath. The men go down first, and when they have finished the women follow. All are expert swimmers, and the delight with which they splash in the water is a sight to see. A native preacher, pressing on his hearers the need of inward cleansing, challenged them, "What would you think of the dirty fellow who did not go to the lake every morning for his bath?" One smiled to think that there are few congregations of whites to whom this would be a really effective appeal.

Life in the villages is very simple. A clearing is made in the forest by cutting down the trees three or four feet from the ground, and the brushwood is burned to destroy the grass and fertilise the ground for the village gardens. Here the community settle, build their huts and cultivate the clearing for two or three years. When the gardens begin to get overgrown and the minute tenantry of the huts become unbearably numerous, a migration is made and the whole process of clearing, building and cultivating starts anew. By this most wasteful system of cultivation whole stretches of country are denuded of everything worthy of the name of timber, although it is marvellous how soon the forest resumes its sway over the deserted garden. The native has, of course, no use for heavy timber, except an occasional log for his canoe, and even the canoes, to judge by their appearance, seem to have been handed down from prehistoric ages.

The fisherman's life on the lake is not without its perils, not only from sudden storms but also from the stealthy attack of the crocodile and the furious charge of the hippo. Natives of both sexes have an extraordinary capacity for enduring pain. A woman with her arm torn off by a

crocodile walked unaided to the Mission hospital, and sat down among the patients without a word to await her turn to be attended to. A Bandawé fisherman had an almost incredible experience. A crocodile seized him by the arm and dragged him down into deep water. These brutes never worry their victims, but grimly hold them under till they are drowned. The man was an expert swimmer, and he held his breath till the crocodile had to rise to the surface to breathe. Man and brute drew a long breath and went down again together. Another long, grim struggle and up they came once more. On being dragged down the third time a sudden inspiration flashed through the mind of the fisherman. As he expressed it afterwards, "God said to me, 'Bite it on the nose'". Swiftly twisting round he fixed his teeth fiercely in the brute's nose. This sudden attack caused the crocodile to relax its grip, and before it could recover the intrepid fisherman was safe on shore.

One cannot be long among this primitive people without feeling that they have their own vivid human interests and their own serious thoughts about life, however much these may differ from our ways of thinking. Mingled with gross superstition there is much shrewd sense and sound moral teaching. As an exposition of the terrors of a guilty conscience what could be finer than their parable of the wild beast that committed a crime and fled through the forest. Fearing it was pursued it stopped and listened. The white ants were working busily in the grass with a steady swish, swish. "It is the pursuers," cried the fugitive, and fled on. Again it paused and listened, and again it fled, and so continued without respite till it sank and died.

Such legends spring out of a deep moral seriousness which, however it may be overlaid by blind and savage customs, provides a soil where the Gospel can take root, and that the Gospel has taken root among the lake shore folks is manifest at a glance. The very faces and aspect of their women have undergone a change. In more remote and heathen parts of the country it is pitiful to watch how the women, as one passes them on the forest path, slink into

the grass and go crouching by with cowed and suspicious looks, gently beating their hands together as if to deprecate the stranger's wrath. Around Bandawé the women pass with bright smiles and a cheery salutation of "Mona da" (Good morning, father), to which one cannot but respond with a "Good morning, mama," both salutations being uttered with complete indifference as to the time of day.

One of the brightest souls I ever met was old Rachel Mgulayora. An interesting story was told of her devotion. When Bandawé church was being built the women of the Atonga promised a month's work in treading clay and carrying bricks. Rachel, who was unwell, came and said, "I am not able to give a month's work, but I will give six hens". For her it was a generous gift, and was gratefully accepted. Some time after she came again with a two-shilling piece which she offered.

"Oh, but you cannot afford this," said the missionary; "you are poor and you have given already."

But Rachel insisted, "I got it in a present," she explained, "and I want it to go to the building of the church".

A third time the faithful creature appeared with beaming face. "I am better now," she said, "and I want to give my month's work." She is a type of those older Christian women of Nyasaland who have experienced the difference between a heathen and a Christian land. Their early years were a long, hideous nightmare, through dread of the slave raider and the Ngoni warrior. Livingstone, passing through their country, cried out in anguish, "Blood, blood, everywhere blood," and declared that the very crocodiles in their streams were glutted with human flesh. Now they have literally passed from death to life, and they feel that there is nothing too good to do to show their gratitude.

Frail and nearly blind, old Rachel came to pay her respects. Her arms were deeply scored with tribal marks, and a white ornament was inserted in her upper lip. As she squatted on the gravel path in front of the house, little white Margaret stood beside her, and the two made a pretty picture together. Between them they had but one word in common. It was *parwemé* (good-bye). The little maid,

putting her mouth close to Rachel's ear, lisped, "*Pavemé*". Instantly the old face lit up with a wonderful smile. She made as if she would have caught the child in her arms. "*Eh, pawemé!*" she exclaimed, with the fervour and delight of the dearest old grannie in the world.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A TRIP TO NGONILAND.

NO man is entitled to be called an experienced traveller who has not had experience of travelling by machila. The recipe for a machila is as follows : a stout bamboo pole, with a hammock slung below it, and a team of a dozen high-stepping, quick-trotting natives to shoulder the pole, two at a time. It is true that the Portuguese down on the coast use four carriers at a time, who jiggle along with short, mincing, irregular steps, in the most ridiculous and effeminate way. But this is a refinement of luxury not to be looked for in the interior, any more than the quiet amble of a lady's pony is to be expected of a broncho. The raw native, who sees the Portuguese jelly-fish trot for the first time, is convulsed with inextinguishable laughter, and, on his return home, will entertain his village to a daily pantomime.

No vehicle is more deceptive in appearance than the machila. It looks positively inviting, not to say luxurious, as it waits at the door. You survey it from the veranda with the most pleasing anticipations, not unmingled with shame, while friendly hands are putting into it a couple of cushions, an umbrella, camera, water-bottle, half a dozen oranges, and, with a fine touch of irony, a book to read by the way. With discreet smiles they invite you to enter. Here is the beginning of trouble, for you are not sure which end goes in first. After one or two preliminary attempts you suddenly and ignominiously roll in, to find that the camera, water-bottle, oranges, and the rest, yielding to the law of gravitation, are embedded in the most uncomfortable and inaccessible places. Before you can bestow the cargo the two carriers give a grunt and start off at a sharp trot.



It may be they are fresh, and wish to show their paces, but the result is an extraordinary heaving and jolting, with a side swing of the most sickening sort. After five minutes one feels as if every bone were shaken out of joint, the whole inner man an indistinguishable jelly, and the end imminent.

Nor is this all. Every now and then the carriers change, heaving the passenger from one to another like a sack of flour. They plough into the long grass, and if there is dew on it the canvas gets soaked and tightens till one's nose is flat against the pole. Vicious grass ticks and other insects are sprinkled plentifully about. If the path winds through the forest the carriers are none too careful of one's elbows, and at last there comes an agonising moment when one fairly runs aground on the stump of a tree and feels as if split asunder. As the ship strikes square on the end of her keel, otherwise called the spine, that horrible shudder, often read about but now most acutely felt, runs through all her timbers. It is one of the greatest proofs of the adaptability of human nature that man is able, in time, to grow used to a machila.

It was on a trip to Ngoniland that I had my first and last experience of machila travelling. Finding there was a week to wait for the meeting of the Mission Council at Bandawé, I hastily arranged the journey, as I was likely to have no other opportunity of seeing the ancient enemies of the Atonga in their native wilds. Of the Atonga boys who were my companions on this *ulendo*, I have the pleasantest memory. First, I recall with real gratitude my faithful Jumari, who not only went with me on this trip but followed me in all my wanderings as cook and capitao. He knew less than a dozen words of English, and I knew as little of Chitonga, but we got on wonderfully well, and a more loyal attendant no one could hope to meet. He traversed 800 miles of forest and mountain, every step of the way on foot, and carried a paraffin lamp in his hand which he brought in at the end of the journey with the glass still unbroken. Then one thinks of Hanok, always in front with the provision basket on his head, a strange figure, clad in tatters

that had once been a jacket, and having the general appearance of a tramp rag and china merchant. One thinks, too, of Simon and John, a decent pair who carried my box between them on a pole, and of big, good-humoured Farudi, one of the machila team who trotted along singing an endless refrain of "Wamama, wamama". How irresistibly funny it seemed to hear a man of the build of a coal heaver calling in that childish way on his mother. Then there was Matekenya, an Ethiopian in faith though not in race, with Marco and the rest, willing, cheery fellows all. I had no fault to find with them, and am glad to remember that at the end of the journey they reported me, "a man of comfort".

The country between the lake and Ngoniland may be divided roughly into four belts: first, the shore of hot sand and coarse, long grass; then a wide flat covered with dense forest and *dambo* (swamp), and crossed by deep streams swollen at the close of the rainy season; next, the ascent of the hills, steep and wooded, and crowned by the bare summit of the Vipya, a place of Scotch mists and abrupt ravines; last, the Ngoni plateau, an open cattle country ringed round with jagged peaks.

Leaving Bendawé we pushed across the flat, crossing with difficulty some of the deeper swamps, and late in the afternoon reached Vizara, a rubber plantation of the African Lakes Corporation. Early next morning, all unconscious of what awaited us on the Vipya, I strolled leisurely round the plantation and viewed with interest the process of rubber collecting. A herring-bone cut is made in the bark of the tree, down which the milky juice trickles into a metal cup. Each worker goes round a certain number of trees daily to empty and reset the cups, and at the same time to take a thin paring off the side of the cut to make it bleed afresh. At night he brings in a pailful of juice, which, having begun to coagulate, has exactly the appearance of curds and whey. The white curd is lifted out, weighed, rolled into sheets and dried.

Somewhat late in the morning we took the road and turned our faces to the hills. We pressed forward through

dense growth and soon began to climb. Here the machila was useless, owing to the steepness of the ascent. On and up we went, our path the dry channel of a stream full of stones and tripping roots. About two o'clock we stopped for lunch at a pool which appeared to consist of strong soap-suds, several cupfuls of which I was fain to drink under the name of tea. We resumed our climbing, on and up, a veritable Hill of Difficulty. At last a rocky eminence was reached, where a break in the trees revealed, beneath and behind us, a world of wooded hills and valleys with the blue lake in the far distance. *Liwonatonga*, the spot is called, which means the place whence you see the land of the Atonga. Thither in the old days the Ngoni came to spy out and plan their bloody raids. Now, here was I, an unarmed stranger, travelling pleasantly to Ngoniland with a handful of Atonga carriers, who in their boyhood had fled the Ngoni terror, but had now no cause to fear. It was an index of the change that has passed upon the land. We took barely a breathing space on the watchtower rock. The terrible Vipya still rose in front of us, and must be crossed before night, for on that exposed upland natives have been known to perish of cold. Emerging from the trees we saw the bare, rolling summit scored with ravines. The sun had sunk behind it and the mist began to roll in threateningly. We hurried on, Hanok in front, as usual, making the pace in great style, and the team tailing away behind. Before the light was quite gone we had crossed the bare summit and entered the forest again.

Our camping-ground for the night was to have been a certain Mafutas, a place it was never our fortune to see, though we sought it long and earnestly. Our trouble came at a fork in the path where, after a lively debate, we took what must have been the wrong turn. After that it was hide-and-seek through forest, streams and swamps. Fortunately there was a good moon, and late at night we struck a miserable hut, where a voice from within gave information which appeared to satisfy the carriers that it was useless to go farther. By the time we had settled this, and the weary men had indicated by signs that

Mafutas was somewhere beyond the moon, a cheery voice at my elbow suddenly said, *Mona bwana* (Good morning, sir). It was the owner of the hut, who, of course, had his first sleep well over.

"Good morning," I replied, and burst out laughing at the absurdity of the salutation. "It is easy for you, old man, to say Good morning, but we have not been in bed yet."

Nobody, of course, understood, but the laugh went round none the less heartily. In a wonderfully short time Jumari had a fire kindled, and a decent supper well in hand. The tent, which we had not seen since afternoon, arrived, after much coo-eeing, from the opposite direction from which we had come, and things looked promising for the night. As I opened my box in the moonlight, John and Simon hunkered down at each end, curious to see its contents. I picked out a flashlight and presented it towards Simon. He, thinking it something very different, opened his mouth to its widest, and when the flash struck him, lighting up the great expectant cavern of his throat, he rolled over on his back. John laughed immoderately at his fellow-apostle, a laugh in which Simon, to do him justice, joined heartily as soon as he recovered.

It was a memorable night. Months after, in a far-distant part of the interior, the night before we reached Livingstone's grave, we had a similar long weary trek after sunset, looking for a village that seemed infinitely remote. Suddenly, as I followed Jumari in the path, he turned, and, with a grin that showed his white teeth gleaming in the moonlight, he said, *Ku Mafutas*. He too, it would seem, treasured the memory of it.

Next morning we had a pleasant run through woods heavily festooned with grey lichen, four to six feet long, which gave the trees a singularly hoary appearance. Reaching the edge of the forest we looked across a wide, treeless flat, dotted with enormous ant-hills and occasional rocky eminences, and encircled to the north and west by rugged mountain-chains. Near the middle of the plain Mt. Bwabwa reared its bold and striking form. It is a solid



rock, with grey, scored sides, so bare as to appear unscalable. Connected with this mountain is an African legend of the Tower of Babel. In the beginning of the world, they say, men came up from the lake, seeking heaven among the hills. Finding heaven was higher than the hills, they climbed Mt. Bwabwa, but found that Mt. Bwabwa was not heaven. Then they set to work to build a lofty wooden tower. The tower rose so high that the builders were compelled to take their wives and their food up with them, and still they built on. But, as they built, the white ants gnawed the wood below, and the tower collapsed and destroyed them all. "And," it is added in confirmation, "their bones are there to this day."

One could not gaze on the whole scene without the deepest interest. Here was the home of the renowned Ngoni, once the terror of the country, the Huns of Nyasaland, but now the sweet singers of Central Africa. The very war song they sang, when they sent round the fiery cross to call the tribesmen to their bloody raids, is now wedded to Gospel words that summon sons and brothers to the banner of Christ. We had already passed groups of Ngoni in the forest, the men armed with their formidable spears, for the lions had been troublesome of late and had killed a dozen of the people. Yet as one encountered these brawny warriors, one had no thought of danger. They stood aside in the path when we met, and to our greeting of *Timwonani* (We see you), they answered with a cheery *Yewo* (Here we are).

From the rim of the forest the roofs of the Mission-station at Ekwendeni were visible in the distance, and one eagerly anticipated meeting there with Dr. Elmslie. The apostle of the Ngoni, that truly great missionary, has done more than any other man to tame these wild raiders by his upright Christian character, his medical skill, and, not least, his irresistible humour. For the veteran, in spite of his grizzled locks and long years of service, retains a spirit of delicious gaiety that sparkles like sunbeams on a sword-blade.

Having crossed the flat, the machila team put on a final



spurt, and dashed up to the door in a style calculated to impress the Doctor if he had been there. Unfortunately, however, he was from home. He had left that morning to visit a remote part of his vast parish, intending afterwards to make for the Council at Bandawé by another route. In this awkward fix, with no interpreter at hand, I inquired for *msambisgi* (the teacher), and was conducted to the school. The *msambisgi*, honest fellow, had a very limited English vocabulary, but he indicated that there was a Mandala man in the neighbourhood, and led the way to the store. Suddenly he halted, and, with painful pauses, jerked out, "Sir, I have remember—he not here—he bitten by buggies—and—seersly ill". It sounded absurd, but it proved to be the sober fact. The Mandala man had been the victim of the house tick, which causes a serious, recurrent fever, and he was just recovering after several relapses. This, however, did not prevent him from entertaining me with the greatest kindness. Dr. Elmslie having left an open house, I took possession without ceremony, and slept in the comfortable assurance that locked doors are no longer a necessity in Ngoniland.

In the morning the carriers came limping to the door with various degrees of lameness, headache, and internal pains. I had intimated overnight my intention of making for Loudon, two days to the south, and the prospect of this big extension of the trip had produced these alarming symptoms. On my announcing that I had abandoned the idea, and would return straight to Bandawé, there was an instant change of countenance, and everybody began to feel better.

In a short time, with a rousing machila song, the team started off like willing horses, with their heads turned home. Ere night we were over the Vipya and well down through the hills to Tongaland. We passed the night at the village of Jamus Mutambo. Jamus appeared a decent, garrulous old man, and when he had paid his respects he fell into talk with the men. One of the machila men, evidently a born comic, presuming on my ignorance of the language, commenced a highly dramatic narrative in which

he was plainly taking me off. Old Jamus and the villagers, after certain nervous glances in my direction, assured themselves it was quite safe, and began hugely to enjoy the fun. In my limited vocabulary, however, I chanced to possess a most useful word, *chitamani*, the imperative of the verb to shut up, and this imperative I now threw over my shoulder at the comic. No bubble was ever more suddenly pricked, no schoolboy was ever more completely caught. As for poor old Jamus, he was utterly scandalised at his own breach of good manners, and to hide his confusion he turned on the unhappy comic with a torrent of indignant *chitamani's* and bundled him off the ground.

Next morning Jamus was early at my tent door trying earnestly to explain something. The only words intelligible to me were "Yesu Christu," frequently repeated. Presently it appeared that the old man had gathered his people into the little mud-walled school, in order that we might have morning worship together ere I went on my way. I confess it was not without deep emotion that I prayed over those simple folks in words that were unintelligible to them, but not, I trust, unheard by our common Father. Thereafter I was able to pronounce a benediction in their own tongue, and we parted feeling that in spite of diversity of race we were in spirit near akin through our common faith in Christ.

We pushed on across the flat, boring through great dambos where the gigantic reeds and grass, meeting high overhead, made us look diminutive like crawling insects. By noon we reached the Luweya, flowing deep and red after the rains. We crossed one by one in a crazy canoe, and for his twenty voyages the ferryman was amply paid with a couple of handfuls of salt. Soon the blue lake appeared in front, shimmering gloriously in the sun. The machila men quickened their pace and broke into a song. On reaching the shore they made signs that they were dying for a plunge, and, on permission being given, they dashed in and wallowed with delight. A fine run down the lake shore brought us to Bandawé, where we arrived on

Saturday night as the boarder boys were singing their evening hymn.

There we parted, and, with the exception of Jumari, I never saw one of these Atonga carriers again, but I hold them in grateful remembrance. These men had travelled 140 miles in five days, crossing and recrossing twice a range of mountains 6000 feet in height. For this they received the magnificent sum of 2s. 4d. each, including 6d. for food money. It seems a rare commentary on the parrot-cry about the greed and incurable laziness of the African.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### GOD'S GARDEN BY THE LAKE.

THE immense tract of country to the west of Lake Nyasa, which is covered by the operations of the Livingstonia Mission, is divided into provinces rather than parishes. Each European station is the centre of a great diocese containing on an average a hundred out-stations. These central stations, with the exception of two on the lake shore, are planted at strategic points along the summit of a double mountain range, which, like a horseshoe, encircles the Luangwa valley. On the Ngoni plateau, which runs north parallel to the lake, are Kasungu and Tamanda, Loudon, Ekwendeni, and the Livingstonia Institution. As the range bends westward round the head of the Luangwa it leaves an extensive flat at the north end of the lake, where is the station of Karonga. The other half of the horseshoe is formed by the great plateau of North-Eastern Rhodesia, which forms the western rim of the Luangwa basin, as Ngoniland is the eastern. On this plateau are planted the stations of Mwenzo, Chinsali and Chitambo, the last so remote from Nyasaland that few of the workers at the lake have ever seen it.

The affairs of this great Mission are under the control of a Council and Presbytery which meet annually. The former consists of the missionaries alone, the latter includes also native elders, in the proportion of one to every three hundred Church members. In 1914 the meetings were held at Bandawé, and were of special and historic interest as being the occasion of the ordination of the first native



pastors. All the districts were represented except Chinsali and Chitambo. A considerable company had journeyed over the mountains and down the lake from Mwenzo. Great bands of Ngoni had come from the hills, and the Atonga were present in their thousands. Bandawé was like a fair. All types could be seen mingling in the crowds: high-cheeked Ngoni with the tiniest of beards, emphasised in some cases by a safety-pin dangling at the tip; dignified chiefs in loose mantles, teachers in white duck suits and bare feet, boys fresh home from the mines with yellow boots, knickers, slouch hats and walking-sticks, devout old women sparsely clad, young girls in bright calico, with shoulders of polished bronze, mothers with babies slung on their backs, and children innumerable darting about among the throng.

The Council met every morning at seven o'clock and sat through the forenoon. The place of meeting was the so-called office, a plain, unfurnished room, with brick walls and floor, and a thatched roof above, from which a few bats hung head downwards with exemplary stillness through all the sederunts. Here the Council assembled, each man bringing his own camp-chair—something under a score of hard-headed, strong-minded Scotsmen, nearly half of them graduates in medicine. Veterans who had made history were associated with younger colleagues who looked capable of making it, each man a king in his own domain and a shepherd of the people in all the fullness of Homer's great phrase. There is Laws, the father of the Council and the apostle of Nyasaland, in aspect a stalwart Scots farmer, quiet and observant, with the fire of a great passion burning deep in his hazel eyes. Next comes Elmslie of Ngoniland, a man of marvellous vitality, tall and erect, with impetuous speech and great ringing laugh. Near him sits Stuart, his understudy, like the two veterans, a pawky Aberdonian. After these come a trio of younger medical men, Prentice of Kasungu, a born enthusiast for science and the Gospel, Innes of the Institution, gentlest of men, and Chisholm of Mwenzo, prince of good fellows, and my best of comrades by many a camp fire. One might set down a catalogue of the



Council as complete as that of Homer's ships, and far more worthy of remembrance.

Every afternoon the Presbytery met in the church. Extraordinarily interesting it was to watch the proceedings, even though one could understand but little. In the centre were grouped the members of Council; on the low brick galleries round sat a hundred and fifty to two hundred native elders, who took their full share in the discussions. Dr. Innes, as moderator, conducted the business with unfailing courtesy and patience. There was practically no routine work. Every case was a test case to be settled on first principles; every subject was touched at its roots. Here were men laying the foundations of the Christian home and Church and social order of the future, with nothing to guide them but the Gospel and Christian experience. Precedents were being created, not followed. Problems arose connected with heathen superstition, Christian marriage, the creed and government of the Church, and the maintenance of the Christian ministry.

A kirk session had censured a woman for engaging in a devil dance to cure the sick. The case was appealed, and a native elder subtly argued that these dances did, in fact, cure the sick, not through any diabolical agency, but through the nervous influence on the patient—a view which the medical members of Council were not prepared to reject. One felt that casuistry had not perished with the Corinthian Greeks.

Two cases had been referred to the Presbytery, in both of which a husband sought release from the marriage bond. The one because his wife had become insane, the other because his wife had been smitten with leprosy. Tragic cases both, but it must be admitted that the sympathy of the native elders seemed to go out chiefly to the husbands. One and another expressed the view that the Church might surely stretch a point in such hard cases and grant a divorce. A more highly instructed member rose to a point of order. The Presbytery, he said, had already settled the law of marriage. Upon this Dr. Elmslie started to his feet. "It is not the Presbytery that has made the law. It is the

law of Christ. *Mazghu gha Christu*," he repeated in the native speech, with a passionate vehemence that silenced opposition.

The Sunday of the Council was a high day. From early morning the people came crowding in. Three thousand packed themselves into the church, nine-tenths of whom were church members, as was evident when they rose and repeated in unison the Apostles' creed. Meantime a gathering of double the size met in the open air under a shady grove by the lake shore. Here, during one of the prayers, a sudden panic broke out among the people, started probably by some ill-disposed persons. In a twinkling hundreds had vanished into the bush. Mothers lost their children in the rush, and the excitement was immense. When order was restored it was pathetic to see women with babies on their backs peering through the grass to discover if they might safely venture out. It revealed the fact that the nerves of these Atonga are still on edge. Every grown person among them remembers the time when, at the first alarm, nothing but a mad plunge into the bush could avert death or slavery.

In the afternoon the church service was abandoned in view of the panic, and the whole multitude, estimated at eight to ten thousand, assembled at the grove with elders and teachers patrolling the outskirts of the crowd. Dr. Laws preached on Christ crucified. Then Peter Tolé, reputed the finest singer in Ngoniland, sang a translation he had made of the old revival hymn, "The Christian's Home in Glory". There he stood, that once wild Ngoni warrior, among the assembled thousands of his ancient foes, and sang of the sweet fields of Eden and the tree of life. One could not but reckon it, when the whole situation was taken into account, as one of the most thrilling solos ever sung.

Monday morning saw the church again filled for the ordination service. Of the men to be ordained Isaiah was a Tonga, Jonathan and Hezekiah were Ngoni. All three were men thoroughly equipped by education and tested by years of faithful service. As they knelt down together, and



RACHEL AND MARGARET

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ISAIAH, JONATHAN AND HEZEKIAH

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THE KONDOWÉ PLATEAU

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DR. LAWS AT HOME

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Dr. Laws laid his hands on their heads, with the hands of the Presbytery, and ordained them, once mortal foes, to be brother ministers of the Gospel of Christ, one felt it was a heart-moving sight and worth having gone half-way round the world to see.

On entering the vestry at the close of the service we found the deacons engaged with the collection. One was counting the money, another was counting the brass armlets, and a third was counting the eggs. Every single egg he lifted and gravely shook it at his ear. "Truly a worthy son of the auld Scots Kirk!" I could not help remarking. That any worshipper, on such a solemn occasion, should have contributed to the collection a rotten egg might well have appeared an impossibility to any mind but that of a highly trained and experienced deacon.

On returning to the Mission-house I asked Dr. Laws if he had ever dreamed of such a day as this.

"Yes," he replied with animation, "I knew it would come. Never in the darkest day did I doubt it."

"But did you expect to live to see it?" I inquired.

He smiled, "Ah, that is another question". Then, his mind running back on the past, he told of a night of agony he had spent in that very house, with his wife and Sutherland, ready to flee at a moment's notice. In the morning Sutherland's hair was grey. Now Sutherland sleeps in his grave below the Mission-house and Laws has lived to see his forty years of labour crowned by a fully constituted native Church.

Well might he sing his "Nunc Dimittis". Five-and-forty years ago, in the might of his faith and daring, he plunged into the darkest thicket of heathenism, hewed out there a clearing, and planted a garden of God. To-day, the wilderness and the solitary place are glad for him; he has made the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose. They blossom abundantly and rejoice even with joy and singing, for they have seen the glory of the Lord, the excellency of our God.

The business of the Presbytery was now concluded, but the Council continued to sit, day after day, reviewing the whole administration and policy of the Mission. There



was a field-day on the budget, when, with the help of a blackboard, the grant from home was apportioned among the various stations to assuage in some degree the more clamant needs. The problem of staffing occupied another day, and became more bewildering the longer it was discussed. It was, in fact, a game of chess, the chessboard Nyasaland, the pawns missionaries, and the problem how to move to the best advantage in view of furloughs and shortage through sickness. Every possible move was tried, and by night a decision was reached which was completely overturned the next day. The final solution was perhaps the best that could be made of it, though one gentle lady, in the bitterness of her soul at being called to part from her beloved girls, pronounced it to be of the devil.

In the midst of these high debates a doctor gravely rose and moved the immediate adjournment of the house, as his eye had detected a house tick crawling on the floor. This motion was unanimously carried, the members having plainly a wholesome dread of being, as the *msambisgi* would have said, "bitten by buggies". The place of meeting was accordingly changed forthwith, but not soon enough to prevent one of the members being afterwards prostrated with tick fever.

The evenings were devoted to committee work, which gave a welcome respite to a mere deputy. Even missionary human nature, under so prolonged a strain, might excusably faint, and, while the spirit was still willing, the flesh grow weak. It was whispered that once, at the end of a long sederunt, when all were worn out but Dr. Laws, that ancient superman, who continued to press his point with inexhaustible energy, a long-suffering member, imagining himself in a very different place, sleepily remonstrated, "But you know, dearie—". Upon which, even the Doctor had to recognise that the inevitable end had come.

Accommodation being limited, it was my fortune to room with the Doctor, our respective camp beds being pitched in opposite corners of a brick-floored room. Night by night the veteran, still unwearied after the labours of the day, would pour into my most willing, but sometimes heavy, ear

the wealth of his unrivalled knowledge and experience. At a hint that it was bedtime he would begin, slowly and mechanically, to undress, the wonderful flow of his talk never ceasing. By and by he would consent to lie down, inviting me, however, to sit on the edge of his bed. At last the monologue had to be forcibly broken off, and next morning I would wake to find him already up and rummaging among his papers, arranging the business of another day.

A British governor said of him: "He is the greatest man who has yet appeared in Nyasaland". But he is more. Without doubt he is one of the world's supreme workers, a man of a single passion, great in conception and tireless in execution, with an ardour which age and labour cannot quench. A great figure indeed! one of the greatest of our age and country, and worthy to be set beside that of Livingstone! It may be said, without fear of contradiction, there is no greater name in the missionary history of any church than the name of Laws of Livingstonia.

Thursday came and brought the close of the Council, busy to the last crowded minute. The *Queen* had been ordered for twelve noon to take on board those who were going up the lake. At noon the Council was still sitting, and the captain came ashore to urge haste. Four o'clock was fixed, then six, and still the Council sat on. The captain, whose language on the bridge is not always parliamentary, was being gallantly held in play by the ladies, with the powerful aid of afternoon tea, which prolonged itself into late dinner.

Ultimately at 10.30 P.M. the end was reached. After the benediction hands were joined, and the vesper of the Scottish Church was sung—

"O may we stand before the Lamb."

Immediately thereafter we dispersed and hurried to the bay. With the briefest farewells on the shore we jumped into the boats and pulled out towards the *Queen*. It was moonlight, and the figure of Dr. Laws, standing up in the stern of our boat and grasping the tiller, with a capacious

sun-helmet well back on his head like a sou'-wester, made a striking picture of a "sky pilot".

As we sailed out of the bay Dr. Elmslie stood silently looking across at the headland. "Changed days!" he said. "I have seen that hill black with fugitives when the Ngoni were out on the war-path."

## CHAPTER IX.

### A COLLEGE IN THE WILDS.

NINETY miles north of Bandawé Mt. Waller rises nobly above the lake. Behind it, on the plateau of Kondowé, stands the Livingstonia Institution, without doubt the most remarkable achievement in Central Africa. Mt. Waller reaches a height of 4400 feet, and its summit is a gigantic oblong rock, altar-shaped, and supported on three sides by a series of natural buttresses. Viewed from the lake it has a striking, and indeed unique, configuration. At this point the mountains begin to retreat from the lake, and a precipitous ridge or escarpment runs north-west from Mt. Waller. Above this ridge lies Kondowé.

When one lands at Florence Bay and looks up at the gigantic escarpment in front, one begins to inquire sceptically about the ladder. It is not far to seek. A well-made road starts from the bay and in resolute fashion tackles the apparently inaccessible height. Four-and-twenty times, as it ascends, it doubles back on itself, making an unparalleled series of "Devil's Elbows," at each of which there is presented the choice of following the long zigzag of the road or of clambering straight up on hands and knees. The Institution is only four miles from the bay, but the road is twelve miles long, and is credibly reported to be as fine a feat of engineering as anything to be found in the Himalayas. Near its upper end it creeps round the head of a gorge where twin streams, the Manchewé and the Kazichi, fall 600 feet side by side and unite their waters at the bottom. Behind these waterfalls are certain caves, not above three or four feet high in the roof, within which a miserable remnant of the inhabitants had taken refuge from

the Ngoni and the slave raider. There Dr. Laws, crawling in on hands and knees, found them, and now within a mile of the spot he presides over a Christian College.

Emerging on the plateau one is immediately struck with the magnificence of the situation. Here is a tableland of moderate size rising well up out of a billowy country. Across a deep valley the altar-shaped head of Mt. Waller appears. The mountains to the west rise, richly wooded, to a height of 7000 feet. In front, and miles below, the blue lake spreads out gloriously, and beyond it the Livingstone Mountains cut the horizon forty miles away. The air is clear and sharp, and after the sweltering heat of the lake one enjoys the home comfort of a cold in the head.

The Institution stands on the very edge of the plateau, overlooking the lake. Parallel to the edge a fine avenue of Mlanjé cedar has been planted, leaving a strip of 100 yards in width, along which runs the main line of buildings, including schools, hospital, and houses for the staff. On the other side of the avenue are the post office, the native store, and various workshops. Elsewhere on the plateau are to be found a homestead and meal-mill, a brickwork, a saw-mill, and a pottery. Throughout the Institution an excellent water supply has been introduced from the mountains, while a turbine house at the falls generates sufficient power to drive all the machinery and supply electric light in all the buildings.

What amazes one is the extraordinary contrast between the Institution and its surroundings. Wild and savage nature surges up to the very door. A lion may prowl round the houses any night, an antelope may dash across the avenue, pursued by a pack of hunting dogs. One peaceful evening a leopard surprised a pair of happy lovers at the very moment when a certain momentous question was being put. The lady was too excited to notice it, and her companion had the nerve to sit still. The leopard, to his undying credit, slunk off noiselessly into the bush, and left the lady undisturbed to breathe a sweet consent. Walking in the stately avenue, or listening to the whirl of the turbine house, or standing in the operating theatre of



the hospital, one can hardly bring the mind to realise that this is the heart of darkest Africa. So magical a transformation seems possible only in a dream.

The buildings themselves are severely plain, without the least attempt at fine architectural effect, but the whole plan is spacious and impressive in the highest degree. Everywhere there is evidence of a master mind, with far-sweeping vision and profound faith in the future. Dr. Laws is beyond all comparison the Grand Old Man of Central Africa, but fully to appreciate his greatness he must be seen at the Institution. His is a mind capable at once of grasping a great conception, and of patiently working out the minutest details. In his office a score of departments are centred. The most prominent article of furniture is a ponderous bureau, reaching almost to the ceiling, the drawers of which are labelled, to name but a few at random, "Native Church, Medical, Educational, Government, Post office, Carpentry, Engineering, Agriculture, Apprentices, Home Invoices, Goods in transit," etc. He is master in every workshop, as was evident when we walked through them together. In the printer's shop he knew every fount of type and every quality and style of paper. In the carpentry department he could lay his hand on the whole stock of nails, screws, bolts, and fittings of every description. Nothing appeared to escape his eye. Passing through the native store he observed a roll of calico with two pieces awkwardly snipped out of it.

"Paddy, come here," he called to the native shopman. "When you cut out patterns, cut them across and not down. You are wasting the cloth."

It brought to mind a little incident at Bandawé. Entering our common bedroom one night he noticed a mat laid awry. He bent down and carefully straightened it.

"How like an African," he said. "No natural idea of straightness. People won't believe it, but you give the African a great lift when you teach him just to put things straight."

Perhaps no fitter description could be given of his own life's work than simply that—"teaching the African to put

things straight". His forty odd years in Central Africa have been largely occupied with trivial duties requiring infinite patience and earning no applause, yet he has laboured with immense cumulative effect, and in such wise the foundations have been firmly laid for the Christian civilisation of the future.

Early one morning he led the way into a thicket on the highest part of the plateau.

"Here," he said, "is the site of the Overtoun Memorial Church. The clock at the post office will be put upon the tower and will be seen for miles around."

Then, boring deeper into the thicket and standing up to the knees in the dewy grass, he waved his hands towards the surrounding trees: "Here is the site of the permanent college buildings, and this is the quadrangle".

A few moments later we emerged from the thicket, and, standing in the open, he looked eastward with pardonable pride over a wide panorama of wooded hills and rich valleys, all of it the property of the Institution, the princely gift of the British South Africa Company.

"The Home Committee," he said, "were very reluctant to be saddled with all this land, but the day is coming when it will be of great value. You know," he continued, speaking as one Aberdeen student to another, "what a blessing the Aberdeen University bursaries have been to the poor students of the north. Where did the funds come from? Much of it from lands gifted long ago to the University, not of great value at the time, but now a rich endowment. So will it be with these lands."

As one listened one could foresee, in the light of the old man's faith and vision, the Institution becoming the University of Central Africa, and the keen-minded lads from all the surrounding tribes flocking up to its bursary competition.

The Institution raises the whole question of the higher education of the native, and, for the unprejudiced mind, settles it as well. Opposition to the policy is widespread in commercial circles, and often vehement. But one observes that the planter who is most contemptuous of the

educated native finds it convenient to have one or two as clerks in his office. One of this type we met at Chitambo. He had no manner of use for the mission boy. But the retort came quick.

"You are 200 miles from home," said the missionary, "and you have left your whole place under the charge of your captao, a Mwenzo mission boy. How is that?"

"Oh, I can thoroughly trust him," was the lame reply; "but then he is an exception."

Observation seemed to point to these exceptions being fairly numerous.

No doubt, in the transition stage the sudden inrush of new ideas upsets the balance of certain minds, and produces the phenomenon of the half-educated, self-conceited native, impatient of foreign control. The Ethiopian movement, with its watchword of "Africa for the Africans," has proved troublesome in Central as well as in South Africa. But the Scots missionary, far from encouraging, has done more than any other agency to combat and restrain it. In this he has had the steady support of the leaders of the native Church, who are shrewdly wise in taking the measure of these agitators.

A vain fellow of the Ethiopian persuasion had been stirring up trouble around Ekwendeni, and at length felt himself a match for Dr. Elmslie. He wrote a long and laboured epistle, finishing up with the triumphant challenge, "Answer if you can". No answer being received, he ventured to call on the Doctor to complete his victory.

"What did you think of my letter?" he asked, with impudent conceit.

"A piece of confounded impertinence," was the reply. "Get out of here." And the Doctor rose to his full height threateningly.

"Oh, but—but," stammered the discomfited Ethiopian, as he hurriedly backed to the door, "I did not wish to confound you."

There you have the spirit of it, mischievous childishness more than anything else, the natural conceit of a half-trained mind. It can be very dangerous, for a child is cruel, and

there sleeps a savage in every African, as in every human, breast. But to stamp on it brutally, to call for the total abolition of native education, to regard it as a disease peculiar to the African, is to be lost to all sense of justice, and to ignore all the lessons of history.

The only remedy is obviously more and sounder education. The policy of repression plays into the hands of agitators, for an ignorant and superstitious people is the most inflammable of all material. On the contrary, an educated people is the best check on the mischief maker. Give the African education at home, and he will have no need to travel for it to America and form there dubious associations, returning to his people a bird of ill omen. Or if he does, he is likely on his return to meet his match and find his level. This is the only policy which accords with our British instinct for justice, and in spite of colonial indifference and hostility it will prevail. Vast and dim and uncertain as the future of the native problem is, yet, with wisdom and patient guidance, another half century should see, between the Cape and the Great Lakes, an African race to whom English is their mother tongue and who are rapidly finding their stride in the onward march of civilisation.



## CHAPTER X.

### ALONG THE FARTHEST BATTLE-FRONT.

FROM Karonga, at the north end of Lake Nyasa, a line runs over the mountains to the south end of Tanganyika. It is the boundary dividing German East Africa from Nyasaland and North-Eastern Rhodesia. The same indulgent British Government which made a present of Kilima Njaro, the Switzerland of Africa, to the Kaiser, conceded here a large and populous country where no German had any claim to be, and divided asunder tribes, like the Winamwanga, whose sole desire ever since has been to be reunited under the Union Jack. Close along the frontier on the British side runs the Stevenson Road, connecting the lakes. Perhaps one ought to say ran, for this once famous road, built as a link in the great waterway from the east coast to the heart of the continent, and apparently destined to be a main highway of civilisation and commerce, has been completely side-tracked by the Cape to Cairo Railway, and has relapsed to the condition of a bush path. Where the road enters the hills a monument stands on a rocky eminence to remind the grateful traveller of the philanthropist at whose expense the road was built. But the traveller's gratitude is sensibly diminished when he finds that the road, in places, is more easily discernible on the map than in the forest.

This road I was now to follow, intending from Karonga to push up through the hills to Mwenzo, and thereafter make a long trek to the south-west down the great plateau of North-Eastern Rhodesia till I should strike the Cape to Cairo Railway at Broken Hill. An arduous journey through remote and savage parts, but one which gave promise, afterwards amply fulfilled, of rich and varied experiences.



When we left the Institution there were three of us, familiarly known as the Professor, the Doctor, and the Deputy. Dr. Chisholm, that prince of good fellows, was returning from the Council to his beloved Mwenzo. Nobody like him for marshalling a line of carriers and chaffing them into good humour for the day's march. The more critical the situation the more imperturbable was he, as with deep gravity he would invite the company to partake of an invisible banana. The Professor, all too youthful for that grave title, was rollicking home for his first furlough by the most wild and circuitous route. Nature had embarrassed him with the endowment of an uncommonly big heart, which he took extraordinary precautions to hide, pursuing, for this end, a policy of ignoring conventions and shocking friends by harmless improprieties. Relieved of teaching theology to native preachers, he was keenly anticipating the next Edinburgh Rugby season. But the World War sent him into the trenches instead, where, much to his embarrassment, they insisted on giving him the D.C.M. On the Doctor, too, the war was soon to lay a rude hand, driving him into the bush with his wife and child, where he settled down philosophically and proceeded to build and run a military hospital.

All three of us were on wheels, for I had the great good fortune to procure a cycle at the Institution, which gave me permanent deliverance from the purgatory of the machila. Cycling on the forest paths is a performance of the nature of trick riding. The road varies from a first-class cycle track to an impenetrable tangle or a hopeless swamp. Grass and scrub brush one's legs on either side, and at any moment the pedal may strike a snag or a little ant-hill, the size of an upturned flowerpot and as hard as a brick. Often the path is so winding as never to be visible for more than two or three yards ahead, and expectation is kept continually on the alert as to what is round the next turn. On one occasion the Professor, rounding a sharp corner, found himself on the edge of a deep pool with the remains of a broken rustic bridge in front. There was nothing for it but to fling himself off into the grass. Before he could re-

cover the Doctor's portly form was precipitated on to him, and the Deputy, following close, added himself to the heap, thankful to be on top and not below. The crossing of streams is always a speculation. The path in front disappears over the bank. The bed may be dry and the path worn smooth, in which case a swift rush down one slope enables the cyclist to climb up the other. But then there may be water, or a mass of boulders, or a treacherous deposit of loose sand where the cycle skids, in which case it is necessary to dismount. Thus one advances to the edge, craning one's neck to discover what lies ahead, and to decide on the instant what strategy to adopt.

When progress becomes impossible the cycle-boy, who has been trotting behind, takes the cycle, and probably carries it on his shoulder by preference, even where he might wheel it. At the crossing of a deep stream or a dambo he may have to carry across both the machine and the rider. Yet it is surprising how much cycling can be had by a careful rider who is prepared to seize every opportunity and sit in the saddle till he is brought to a stand or thrown into the grass. As the carriers cannot do more than an average of twenty miles a day, if even half that distance is cycled, the whole day's journey becomes a comparatively light affair.

On leaving the Institution to proceed to Karonga our first experience was to cycle down the mountain road to the flat at Florence Bay. It was a severe test of our nerves and of our brakes. Many of the corners being too sharp to be negotiated, one could only creep down to them, jump off, turn the cycle round, and start on the next incline. As we cautiously pursued our way down this headlong zig-zag, two native boys kept sliding down the mountain side to have the pleasure of seeing us go by. After we passed they slid down to the next level and waited our re-appearance. When this had been repeated several times it gave one the feeling of riding round and round a cycle track past the same point and the same spectators.

North of Florence Bay the mountains, beginning to retreat westward, leave a flat which stretches up to the head

of the lake, and in which cotton planting has been attempted with some success. Along this flat we now cycled, extricating ourselves with some difficulty from the hospitality of the planters, with whom both the Doctor and the Professor were evidently very popular, and by noon of the second day we reached Karonga.

In the history of the rise of our African empire the name of Karonga figures prominently. It was the farthest outpost of civilisation, pushed right into the heart of the slave-raiding country. There Captain, afterwards Sir Frederick, Lugard with a handful of Mandala men waged a long and dubious war with Mlozi, the Arab slaver and self-styled Sultan of Nkondé. Mlozi had entrenched himself at Mpata, seven miles from Karonga, in a strong position commanding the pass into the hills and the ferry over the North Rukuru, and closing the road to Tanganyika. He had let loose his dogs of war, the Ruga-ruga, and was wasting the villages of Wankondé. One horrible scene was enacted near a lagoon to the north of Karonga. The fugitive Wankondé having taken refuge in the tall reeds and grass by the lake shore, Mlozi's men set fire to the reeds and burnt them out. Those who fled the flames were shot or speared, while those who plunged into the water fell a prey to the swarms of crocodiles that had gathered to the horrid feast. Mlozi owned allegiance to the Sultan of Zanzibar, and was working for the complete clearance of the white man from Nyasaland and the undisturbed continuance of the slave trade. At Deep Bay, a few miles north of the Institution, where the lake contracts to a width of fifteen miles, there was a regular slave ferry. As many as forty thousand unhappy creatures were taken across annually on their way to the slave markets at the coast.

It was an intolerable situation and one full of the gravest peril. Mandala, under the resolute leadership of the brothers Moir, undertook to dislodge Mlozi. "An uphill task," Lugard wrote, "only half a dozen men and those all sick, natives we can't rely on and discontented to boot, bad guns, bad ammunition, no bayonets, no entrenching tools, and so vast an area to guard and so powerful an enemy." The

struggle with the slaver was arduous and often desperate, maintained with extraordinary gallantry, but with inadequate resources. John Moir went home to England and brought out a cannon to pound the slaver's stockade, but still no decisive result was reached. An inconclusive peace had to be patched up, which left the slaver more powerful and lawless than before. At last, however, the British Government, fully aroused and gripping things with a firmer hand, sent up a force which put an end to the slave-raiding, and hanged Mlozi for his crimes.

Once again, in the World War, the name of Karonga has figured in despatches. The Germans, worthy successors of Mlozi, let loose the Ruga-ruga on undefended villages. Even here, on this the remotest of their frontiers, they had their field and machine guns ready. Fighting occurred all along the frontier from Nyasa to Tanganyika. Karonga was attacked, but the enemy was driven off with heavy loss and compelled to keep to his own side of the Songwé River. Gradually troops for the invasion of German East Africa were assembled, ready to co-operate from the south with General Smut's great drive from the north. While they lay at Karonga the Institution proved of immense national value. Its medical staff and hospital were at the disposal of the wounded, its meal-mill ran night and day grinding flour for the troops, and Dr. Laws slept with his ear at the telephone receiver. Probably the British Government would freely admit that all the money ever spent on the Institution was repaid to the nation tenfold in that critical time. The fact seems worthy of mention as an interesting by-product of missionary enterprise.

Karonga, when we arrived there, was, like the rest of the Empire, all unconscious of the storm so soon to burst. The worst trouble at the moment was a plague of *kungu* flies. This fly is a species of midge peculiar to Lake Nyasa. It rises in great clouds from the surface of the lake, and drifting inshore literally covers the ground. On a clear day these clouds can be seen hovering over the surface of the water like smoke pillars, and one would confidently say there were a dozen or a score of steamers in the distance.



Having read the account of a traveller who affirmed he had seen the *kungu* covering the ground to the depth of a foot, I made careful inquiry, but the oldest inhabitant could not vouch for more than an inch in depth, which, to be sure, is a prodigious quantity. The natives welcome the swarms of *kungu*, which they sweep up and bake into cakes. In missionary circles it is facetiously held to mark the topmost height of Christian charity and devotion to the natives when, for their sakes, a man is enabled to rejoice in a plague of *kungu* flies. This superlative degree of virtue I was far from attaining. In the Karonga Mission-house, at the Mackenzie's hospitable table, a little black boy had the sole duty of walking round unobtrusively sweeping up the flies, much as a table-maid in happier climes sweeps up the crumbs. By the time he had completed one round it was necessary to begin another, for the flies continued to fall like a shower of soot. Unfortunately, he could not sweep the dishes and the food. As for these, the guests must needs make the best of it.

Yet one has the pleasantest memories of Karonga, of the singing of the children, and of glimpses of native home life. In company with Mrs. Mackenzie we visited one of the villages and entered several of the huts. Our hostess treated the inmates with the most charming courtesy, such courtesy as is at times overlooked even by the best of missionaries. The native teacher's wife lived in a tiny, three-roomed, mud-walled house, built in European style. Hearing we were in the village, she began hurriedly to set her house in order, and as it was still early morning, we took a turn up and down till she was ready to receive us. The abode was humble enough, but a vast advance on the native hut. It was a home where a Christian man and his wife could bring up their children decently. And when one saw the quiet happy mother, who in early girlhood had been found by the Mission a white man's castaway, ill, crushed, and heartless, and who now, by kindness and the power of the Gospel, had been reanimated with a Christian and womanly spirit, it was a powerful tonic to faith.



Miriam's husband has a gift of song, is the author of a popular hymn, and has trained an excellent choir. On visiting his school we were greeted with a pretty chorus of welcome, the children holding aloft bunches of flowers as they sang. Then, somewhat ambitiously, they attempted a song in English, of which the refrain was, "We are come from fairyland". "Fah-rah-laan" they pronounced it, and as some of the pupils were stalwart fellows, with the build and appearance of coal-heavers, the general effect was delightfully droll.

Returning from school we met an old chief, Mereré, who had been through the wild Mlozi days. He now had the mixed reputation of being at once a notable judge, polygamist, and beer-drinker. He inquired for his old friend, John Moir, and sent his regards.

"And if John Moir asks, 'Is Mereré a Christian?' what shall I say?" we asked him.

"Say, I am a lost one," he replied. Then, by way of explanation, he added, "It is God's will that I should be a lost one".

It was startling to hear so familiar an excuse from the lips of that old heathen. But Mereré's eyes, glazed and dim with beer-drinking, were more truthful than his tongue, and gave the real reason. As one looked at him and remembered the children singing in the Mission-school, with their bright flowers and pretty ways, one felt a contrast as of darkness and dawn, and could not but rejoice in the passing of the old order.

We left Karonga in a blinding shower of *kungu* flies. Our *ulendo* had been organised in the forenoon, and the Doctor wisely insisted on a short half-day's march to get the men disentangled from their friends, and ready for the road in serious earnest next day. A Karonga lad, who had been assigned to me for cycle-boy, asked leave to go to his village, promising to join us as we passed. I demurred, but Mackenzie said, "He is all right, you can depend on Alick". With that I had to be content. Sure enough in the afternoon, as I cycled through a village on the flat, I heard the sudden patter of bare feet behind me. It was

Alick, a fine strapping lad, and, as I was afterwards to find, a willing runner and a gentleman.

We crossed the North Rukuru and reached the pass at Mpata before sundown. There, in a romantic little fold of the hills, we pitched our camp. After supper the carriers gathered round the camp-fire for evening prayers. The bronze faces gleaming in the firelight, the Doctor in the centre, reading in his quiet, kindly voice, and the hush of night upon the closely encircling hills, made a picture of rare and touching beauty. The picture abides. Mlozi is gone, the day of the slave-raider is ended, and the Gospel holds the pass.

## CHAPTER XI.

### SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLMASTERS.

EVERY true Scotsman has an absolute belief in the value of education, a belief entirely unconditioned by questions of race or politics. Consequently, when the Scots missionary goes to Central Africa, he takes his educational faith with him, trains his native teachers and covers the country with his village schools. The native teachers in Livingstonia are an influential part of the community, and a factor to be reckoned with in estimating the future. They form an exceedingly interesting, if sometimes amusing, study.

A few days after leaving Karonga we had an encounter with them in force. We were resting at Forthill for the Sunday, and the villagers for miles round, knowing of our presence, had come in for service. It was at this service that a native elder, waxing eloquent in prayer, gave thanks for the Deputy who had come so far to visit them "over land and sea, in hunger and thirst, and stubbing his toes on the tree roots". It was a feeling touch for a bare-footed audience, and might fairly be held to cover the Deputy's stiff knee and skinned elbow, the result of a fall from his cycle.

At the close of the service the village teachers present, to the number of twenty or thirty, asked a special meeting with the Deputy, whom they seemed unaccountably to regard as a glorified school inspector. The request was readily granted, and after some remarks they said, "May we come, sir, and ask questions at three o'clock?"

"Fire away now," said the Deputy, but at this they were somewhat taken aback, not being sufficiently primed.

Only one question was forthcoming, "Was it a fact, as reported, that man had one rib less than woman?" Their thinking evidently began at the Garden of Eden. This momentous point being settled, they retired to set themselves in array against three o'clock.

In the afternoon the first question came very near being a knock-out blow. "What is that?" they asked, presenting a piece of paper on which were written the words *Codex Sinaiticus*. Who would have expected in darkest Africa an inquiry about the original manuscripts of Scripture? It gave one a sudden and startling impression of the difficulties these poor fellows encounter as they plunge headlong into the accumulated learning of the ages and grope for truth. Other questions, however, were of a more practical kind. Polygamy and beer drinking especially came under review.

"They say to me," said one, recalling an encounter with some subtle polygamist, "that the Bible often uses the singular for the plural. 'The righteous man' means many righteous men. So, when the Bible says one wife, perhaps it means many wives!"

One felt that the mind that could fabricate such an argument was acute enough to see through it. But such questions gave a glimpse into the position of these village teachers. They are the front trench men, bearing up against the daily pressure of the enemy. Themselves hardly more than babes in faith and knowledge, and with none of the prestige and mental resource of the white missionary, they are opposed by the authority of ancestral superstition, flouted by the *askari*, tempted by the specious promises of the Ethiopian, and openly contradicted by the boy from the mines who has added the cheap scepticism of the whites to his own native heathenism.

It was the day after this encounter that we made the acquaintance of one-eyed Shem. We spent the night at his village. He met us, neatly dressed in a white duck suit, and put his scholars through a very creditable exhibition. His appearance was remarkable. The loss of one eye was more than made up by the terrible intensity of the



other, heightened by a squint. If you dared to look in the direction of the blind eye you found the other glaring at you across the bridge of the nose in the most disconcerting way. In the evening our *ulendo* boys played a game of *mpila*, in which Shem joined with enthusiasm. The game consists in tossing a ball among the players, with an extraordinary amount of hand-clapping and ornamental leaping. Shem was one of the showiest players. He seemed literally to follow the ball through the air, wriggling in every limb. At length, finding his duck suit a sad hindrance, he stripped without ceremony, and stood garbed in a dirty black loin-cloth and the tattered remains of what had once been a striped cotton jersey. It was a painful transformation. Nothing, one fancies, can have happened in history quite like it since Robin Hood unfrocked the Bishop of Hereford and made him dance in his patchwork shirt. Shem now looked the wildest savage of the lot, and no stretch of imagination could have conceived him as a schoolmaster.

One fears there may be some who can peel off the veneer of their education as Shem peeled off his white ducks and revert to their native barbarism. Yet the best of these teachers are without question fine fellows, with a considerable mental capacity. Many a time was one indebted to them as interpreters, a work for which they have great aptitude. On one occasion of addressing an audience, mainly composed of Matabele, the native teacher, a Zulu, rendered the address, sentence by sentence, first into the language of the Matabele and then into Sekolo, the language of Barotseland. This he did with amazing fluency, and when one considered that he was handling three foreign languages, one could not but regard it as no mean linguistic feat.

The village school is of the plainest description, with the rudest possible equipment. Provided by the villagers themselves, it is merely a temporary erection like the other huts, and is left to tumble down when the village is deserted. An oblong building with mud walls and a thatched roof, two or three holes for windows and an open doorway. The floor is smeared with clay, and a low platform of the



same material is raised at the end of the room. In some cases short stakes are driven into the floor, across the top of which rough poles are laid by way of seats. On these the scholars perch like birds on a bough, and more uncomfortable, back-aching seats it would be hard to imagine. Round the school the ground is swept bare, and here the pupils commonly sit in the sun, the little ones tracing their letters in the dust with their fingers. Mingled with the children there are usually some scholars of larger growth, two or three brawny fellows, or a plump young matron, who look oddly out of place. These are probably candidates for baptism, for the Church insists that every member must be able to read the Scriptures in their own tongue. The rule is not strictly enforced in the case of the elderly, and the young accept it readily enough, for there is, on the whole, a considerable keenness to learn.

The value of the teaching varies greatly. In some cases it is the merest parrot work. A certain teacher had laboriously drilled his pupils to repeat after him a few set questions and answers. As the inspection day drew near he further drilled them to repeat the answer in response to his question. On the critical day, however, the pupils forgot this educational refinement. Accordingly, when the teacher asked the first question, it was repeated after him. He tried another with the same result. In vexation he exclaimed, "Why are you so stupid to-day?" to which the class dully responded, "Why are you so stupid to-day?"

The training of teachers is a matter which constantly engages the attention of the Mission. Besides the regular course at the Institution, which is ever setting a higher standard, there are periodic training schools for each district, held during the vacation. At the time of the Council in Bandawé a teachers' school was held under the supervision of the educationalist from the Institution.

In the English class reading and conversation were combined. A row of stalwart, dusky pupils stood with primers in their hands. "The man sits on the chair," was the sentence they were struggling to master. "Thee-a man seats thee-a chair," read one. After the pronunciation

was corrected, the teacher, pointing to his chair, said, "Sit on the chair". The only response was a blank look. The request was repeated to several others with the same result. At last the idea struck one bright youth. He stepped forward, scanned the teacher's face for encouragement, jerked a little nearer the chair, then glanced round to see if the class were laughing at him. Was he right, or was he making a fool of himself? Finally, with another jerk, he subsided into the chair. Yes, he was right. His face broke into a broad grin, and he leaned back surveying the class with all the conscious self-importance of a newly enthroned monarch.

The class on school management was an ambitious attempt, and in the end, though the teaching was singularly lucid, it remained doubtful how much was brought within the comprehension of the pupils. Philemon, one of the advanced teachers, was standing by, helping to find the nearest equivalents in Chitonga for the technical terms. Attention was the subject of the lecture.

"Attention depends on interest. What is the right word for interest?" After various explanations and illustrations to make the point clear, Philemon suggested, as the correct word, *kukhorweska*, and the lecturer proceeded to make use of it. At the close of the lecture he shook his head and said, "I am dubious about that word". And, sure enough, the meaning proved to be to satisfy and not to interest. He had been pressing on these bewildered teachers the necessity of "satisfying" their pupils with the lesson, when probably their own experience was that the pupils were only too easily satisfied.

Under such conditions progress is necessarily difficult and unequal. Yet the results attained are nothing short of marvellous. Thousands can read and write a little, and the number is rapidly increasing. The carrier takes his Bible and hymn book with him on *ulendo*, and reads and sings by the camp-fire. The boy at the mines can write letters home to his friends. A small number of the better-trained pupils find employment as clerks, typists, and Government interpreters. The general intellectual and moral influence of the schools is undoubtedly great.

But the need is greater. The problem of the young in Central Africa is acute. The old, iron rule of the chiefs is broken, the young are unsettled by contact with the new order of things, and in danger of throwing off all restraint. The village fathers and headmen are bewildered and have lost hold of the situation. Parental control is hardly understood. There is no remedy nor hope for the future but in a sound system of moral and religious education. Those who oppose it, and unhappily there are many, are no friends of the African. To doom a vigorous people to lie submerged in perpetual ignorance is an inhuman policy. But, thank God, the flowing tide of Christian civilisation is not to be turned back by the paltry broom of race prejudice.

On Sunday the village school becomes the church, and the schoolmaster mounts his rostrum of clay as the village preacher. He is not hampered by any traditional ideas of the dignity of the pulpit, but talks with easy familiarity and copious, if sometimes incongruous, illustrations. He will relate, in the most refreshing manner, the escapades of his youth, like the preacher who compared a wide-awake conscience to the boy who keeps guard below while you are up the tree for apples. So long as conscience keeps watch you are safe! An Ngoni preacher, treating of the perseverance of the saints, told a vivacious story of how, when a boy, he had been employed by a white man to carry three cats in a basket to Kondowé. It was a light load, but the white man impressed on him the need of exceptional care. At the end of the first day's march one of the cats was dead. Result, a big blowing up and fresh injunctions to carefulness. At the end of the second day another cat was dead, and, when the basket was opened, the third sprang out and ran away. The unfortunate preacher had to admit that he followed the cat's example and made off, returning home empty handed, all his labour lost. On the basis of this story he built the grave moral, that he who would win the rewards of virtue must, without fail, *carry his cats to Kondowé*.

One may smile at preaching so homely and naïve, yet doubtless it often reaches the heart of a simple and primitive

people when the more ambitious flights of the white missionary do but pierce the clouds.

The intimate connection of educational and religious work among the natives has given rise to a widespread and mischievous error. Every native who has attended school, for however short a period, is known henceforth to the whites as a mission boy. On an average, perhaps one in twenty become Church members, but the Mission is held responsible for the behaviour of the other nineteen. It sometimes happens, too, that ex-teachers, dismissed for immorality, get employment as clerks and are regarded as sample Christians. The missionary, on his side, is weary of explaining the situation, which is briefly this, that the native who passes himself off to the white man as a mission boy is probably as little worthy of credit as the pious tramp at home who hiccoughs out, "Your reverence," to the parson. This fact is so simple and obvious that failure to take account of it is hardly excusable in a person of intelligence. Yet much of the popular criticism of the results of Mission work rests on no other foundation.



## CHAPTER XII.

### A ROYAL HOMECOMING.

FOR the best part of a week we had toiled up through the hills from Karonga. The cycles that should have carried us were mostly carried on the heads of the boys, and how the men with the heavy loads achieved the ascent only themselves knew. We were a rather numerous company, for delegates from Mwenzo had been present at the Bandawé meetings, and, having returned by boat as far as Karonga, had rejoined us there on the homeward journey. These worthy elders and teachers acted as our carriers, an arrangement at once convenient for us and profitable for them.

John's wife was there too, with Robert and Alick, fine manly boys, as well as little Harry and baby Nancy. If the question be asked, "Who is John?" the answer is that there has never been but one John in Mwenzo: John the indispensable and chief pillar of the kirk. A Bandawé man, John Abanda, had lived for the past twenty years among the hills, far from his beloved lake shore, and given his life to the work in Mwenzo. Any day, so we were assured, he could have walked across to the Boma and got double the salary from the Government that he received from the Mission, but he stayed on. A noble type of those worthy men whom the Bandawé Church has sent out to the south and west and north to carry the light of the Gospel into the Hinterland. Much as John Abanda would have liked to be at the Bandawé meetings, he could not leave the station in the Doctor's absence. His wife, however, has been visiting her old home, and is now on her way back. Cheerily she plods along from dawn till dusk, with baby Nancy slung now on her side, now on her back. About the second



or third day little Harry goes lame. A hundred and twenty miles over mountains higher than Ben Nevis is rather rough on a wee fellow of six. The indomitable mother gathers him up in her arms and trudges on with her double burden. Fortunately there is an empty machila which has been taken for emergencies. Harry is bundled into it, and there he lies grinning with huge delight. No doubt he thinks it is a glorious finish to his holiday.

On the second day, having climbed to an altitude of 4500 feet, we reached Iwanda, which was once the farthest outpost of the Mission before Mwenzo was occupied. Two lonely graves in the forest remain as a pathetic memorial of the old days. Iwanda is now an out-station of Karonga, under the charge of a native teacher. The teacher introduced himself to us under the name of Robinson.

"Crusoe?" we inquired.

"Yes, sir," he replied, gratified to find himself so well known.

Where did he come by so remarkable a name? He had found it, he said, in his reading-book.

Some of Robinson's boys were guilty of a slight breach of good manners, so trivial as to appear unworthy of remark, yet deserving to be recorded to the credit of the African as the one exception that proved the rule. We three were seated on the earthen floor of the school partaking of our midday meal, when some faces appeared at the open window. The Doctor turned and quietly remarked in the native tongue, "Do you not see that we are eating?" In a moment every face disappeared, and we finished our meal in peace. After months of life in open camp, one is bound to say that on no other occasion was there the least evidence of rudeness or vulgar curiosity at meal times. So strict is the native etiquette in regard to this, that one never caught a native so much as looking in the direction of the table. To those who have seen only the town-bred native in the cities of South Africa this may appear incredible, but the African, unspoiled by contact with the white man, has, with all his ignorance and barbarism, his own code of good manners.

In the afternoon Robinson led us by a bush path to the foot of the hill about a quarter of a mile from the school. There in a thicket we found the graves. One was glad to mark the path which showed that they were not wholly unvisited. Pathetic in their loneliness they seemed, but most peaceful, with no sound but the murmur of a little stream that flows down from the hill and half-encircles them. It bears the musical name of the Mcherenjé, and so home-like did it seem that one could have fancied it was splashing and gurgling down a Scottish glen.

At Forthill we enjoyed a day of Sabbath rest, made doubly grateful by the toil of the long ascent. The people of the neighbouring villages gathered in considerable numbers for worship, and those who had come from a distance camped near us for the week-end. After darkness fell the gleam of their watchfires ringed us round with a cheery glow and the evening was spent in singing. A group of teachers at one of the fires concluded the day with a really fine rendering of the hymn—

Son of my soul, Thou Saviour dear,  
It is not night if Thou be near.

Thereafter each man wrapped a covering about his head, and lay down to sleep on the bare ground. It was inexpressibly touching to listen to that evening hymn sung within hearing of the fierce prowlers of the forest, and to watch the singers lying down to sleep in the assurance of divine protection even in these wilds.

On Monday we reached the country of the Winamwanga, and the Doctor's spirits rose visibly. He expressed his pleasure at being once more among respectably dressed people. The nakedness of the Wankondé had vexed him.

"I always feel that our Winamwanga are so much better dressed," he said.

As the only difference between the tribes in the matter of dress is that the women and girls of the Winamwanga, in addition to the scanty loin-cloth, wear an apron the size of a pocket-handkerchief fastened on behind, the Doctor's verdict must be set down to the partiality of a friend.

It was late on Tuesday afternoon when we reached Mwenzo. News of our coming had preceded us, and from early morning the people had been pouring out of the way-side villages and making the forest ring with the Winamwanga welcome. It is a weird production which must be heard to be appreciated. As soon as the stranger appears in the distance all the women and children utter a high-pitched, piercing note, at the same time vibrating the tongue from side to side of the mouth, and pinching their cheeks rapidly between the middle finger and thumb of the right hand. The result resembles the continuous violent blowing of a regiment of policemen's whistles. As you draw nearer the people line up on both sides of the path, and if you still face the music and advance between the lines, expecting your ears to be split, they suddenly introduce a most pleasing variation. Dropping on their knees they clap gently and rhythmically with their hands. As soon as you pass they jump up and resume the shrilling.

When these unearthly sounds first fell without warning on my startled ear, they were not a little alarming, till I was reassured by the appearance of some black heads among the long grass. After one gets used to it, however, every other form of welcome seems tame and cold. When one goes on to other tribes and is received in silence, one feels distinctly slighted. They ought to have screamed at the sight of us, these senseless people. Nothing short of a universal uproar, we feel, is worthy of our august presence.

At one of the villages the women and girls broke into a dance of welcome. As a dance, it was rather a dismal affair. Slowly they shuffled round in a circle, chanting monotonously *Aye-eh-alum-chusa*, all the while they kept twisting and wriggling their bodies uneasily, as if seeking relief from an intolerable itch. Then they formed in line, and two withered grandmothers stepped out in front and shuffled through a duet. While the dance was proceeding, the Doctor, who seemed to know everybody, pointed out a notable pair of brothers, Kaputa and Kawombwé. Kaputa's head and face showed several long white scars, the memorial of his escape and of his brother's courage. The two were

working together in their garden when a leopard sprang on Kaputa and tore him down. Kawombwé rushed to the rescue, and, grasping the leopard by the tail, tried to drag it off. Then snatching up a native hoe, about the size and weight of an adze, he struck so fierce a blow that the leopard's spine was broken. Under the Doctor's care Kaputa recovered, and there they were, two quiet, pawky old men, with a double bond of blood between them.

In the afternoon we crossed the frontier from Nyasaland to the extreme apex of North-Eastern Rhodesia, and ran on to Fife, the remotest outpost of our Empire in Africa. How extraordinary an organisation this Empire of ours is! Here at the back of the wilds is planted down a British magistrate, charged among other duties with the oversight of customs, and provided with all the necessary forms and schedules. Coming as we did from Nyasaland, we must halt and declare our goods, and pay what might be required of us. Probably the travellers along that route could be numbered on the fingers of one hand, yet a paternal Government had foreseen the possibility of our coming, and had thoughtfully provided for us a schedule. But there are conditions under which even officialism cannot repress humanity. Mr. Jones was unfeignedly glad to see us, as we were to see him. He gathered for us the few strawberries that his garden produced, a rare treat in Central Africa, and sent us on our way refreshed.

After this brief taste of civilisation we resumed our progress through the villages. From Fife to Mwenzo is only a matter of five miles, and along these five miles the welcome of the people reached its height. Our homecoming was a triumphal procession. Scholars and teachers came far out the road to meet us. As soon as the first scouts caught sight of us, they raised their shrill cry, which, being echoed by those behind and passed on from mouth to mouth, must have reached Mwenzo in a few minutes. Thereafter there was continuous shrilling, clapping of hands, and beating of drums, all the way home. Each successive group, as we passed them, fell in behind and joined in hymn-singing, while the road in front was still



black with an oncoming stream of people. Down that stream a sturdy native girl came running with a little white child on her back. It was my first sight of dear wee Maisie, the sunbeam of Mwenzo. The nurse-girl dropped on her knees at the Doctor's feet and clung to him for a moment, while Maisie scrambled tumultuously into her father's arms.


We pushed on up the hill towards the Mission-house. Near the top we were met by a group of lads swinging along at a rare rate and singing lustily. They proved to be the apprentices from the joiner's shop. "What is that hymn they are singing?" I said to myself. "The tune is so familiar." Then it flashed upon me—"John Brown's body!" It was a glorious anticlimax. My heart had been in my mouth a hundred times that day, which made me all the quicker to enjoy this delicious interlude. The song had just come out, and was in the first flush of its popularity. Some boy returning from the mines had brought home a mangled version of it, which immediately caught on, and soon everybody was wailing drearily in Chinamwanga that Johanné Brown was dead and buried. The Doctor, in sheer self-defence, was compelled to offer a decent translation, and this was now being rendered in honour of his return. A few minutes later the weary, dust-choked travellers had received a final and crowning welcome at the Mission-house, followed by the luxury of great warm baths.

Lest it should be thought that all this native demonstration was a mere blowing-off of steam, let me reverently draw aside for a moment the veil from the welcome which these same people once gave, on this same road, to their beloved Doctor. He had been at the Council, and was hastening home, for the sad news had reached him that his first-born, a sweet baby girl, was dead. The villagers, according to their custom, came out to meet him, but when he appeared not a sound was uttered. Sad-eyed and motionless they stood waiting. As he approached and began to pass through the midst of them, they bowed down, and, instead of the hearty hand-clap, every head was



laid in silence in the dust. One wondered why Nancy was so popular a name among the girls of Mwenzo, but when one heard the story of little white Nancy, then one understood.

"I dwell among mine own people," said the Shunammite when it was proposed to her to better her condition. Many have marvelled at the strange indifference to worldly ambition displayed by medical missionaries who are content to forego the prizes of their profession and subsist in savage places on a fraction of the income they might earn at home. Yet one saw most clearly that day on the road to Mwenzo that there are prizes to be won of another sort. To win an imperishable place in the affections of a simple people, to change the current of their history and guide their steps into the ways of peace, is a work for the sake of which any man, even the greatest, might count the world well lost. It offers a career in which a good man will surely find enduring satisfaction and rest of heart.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### A HIGHLAND PARISH.

MWENZO the Africans themselves call it, and it stands high up on the great plateau between the north end of blue Nyasa and the south end of Tanganyika—the “lake beyond the hills”. Mwenz means “the heart,” and probably the name was given because it lies at the heart of the mighty watersprings. From here the spine of Africa runs down towards the south, as clearly defined as the ridge of the High Street in Edinburgh. A little to the east of Mwenz one may stand on the summit of the watershed, at an altitude of 6000 feet, and look back over the vast wooded valley of the Luangwa to the dim hills of Ngoniland, 140 miles away. The Luangwa drains into the Zambesi and eastward to the Indian Ocean. A few yards farther on another great expanse of forest is seen stretching away to the west. Here are the head-waters of the Congo which flows to the Atlantic. Beyond the hills to the north the waters begin to find their outlet towards the valley of the Nile. So they have called it Mwenz because it lies at the heart of the great waters.

But Mwenz might well have earned its name from the warm heart of its people :—

Nowhere beats the heart so kindly  
As beneath the Highland plaid.

Few, alas, of the Winamwanga can boast of anything in the shape of a Highland plaid, but there can be no doubt about the kindly heart-beat. And surely it was the happiest Providence that sent among them the Doctor and his fair lady, who, coming themselves from the capital of the Scottish Highlands, so perfectly understand, and respond to, and

exemplify the courtesy and kindliness of the Highland heart. If the educated native by the lake shore speaks English with an Aberdeen accent, as is credibly affirmed, one may venture to add that the plaintive music of the Celt is to be detected in the speech of the Winamwanga.

A foreigner is always apt to appear a ridiculous creature. His halting utterance, his meagre vocabulary, his broken grammar, give an impression of childishness and make it hard to realise that behind these, struggling vainly to break through them, there may be real virility of thought and refinement of feeling. The prevailingly low estimate of the mental and moral qualities of the African has doubtless been formed in this way. In contact with men of a superior race, of whose language he knows but the merest smattering, he cannot express what is in him, and to unsympathetic eyes he looks a senseless block. Only in his own tongue and among his own people can he express his humour, vivacity, courtesy, affection, reverence. Hence arises, in opposition to the senseless-block theory, the completely contradictory verdict of those who have been patient students of the African, have lived with him and loved him. These, as they dig deeper into the mine, continually discover new treasures of thought and feeling, and receive ever fresh impressions of the richness and variety of the African's mental life.

The Winamwanga exhibit many gracious manners and ways of speech. It was among them that we first heard the fond injunction to "keep the home fires burning". It was Kalulu's wife who said it. We had picked him up at a village to be cycle-boy on the long trek to the south, and as we were moving off a comely young matron appeared with a baby slung on her back. We thought she had come to stop him, as the wives had a habit of doing. But no, she said she was quite willing he should go. Then, turning to Kalulu, she uttered some words in Chinamwanga.

"Do you know what she said?" remarked the Doctor. "She said, 'Good-bye, my husband. Do not let the fire go out'—the fire of his heart's love."

A charming farewell, truly, and almost incredible as addressed to a naked savage. Yet Kalulu, we found in the

weeks that followed, had a heart in which fires of kindness and humour sparkled and burned.

Coo-cooing is another pretty custom of the Winamwanga. When friends meet they place their hands on each others shoulders, and, by way of salutation say, "coo-coo," like a pair of turtle doves. Nor is the language of politeness wanting. "Have you slept well?" asks the host in the humble hut. To which his guest replies courteously, "You have guarded me through the night". It is considered highly improper for a man to meet his relatives-in-law. When they visit his wife he must keep out of the way. This is doubtless a relic of the days when marriage was by capture from a hostile tribe. From this custom arises a novel way of dealing with a boisterous wind. When the wind rises and threatens to unroof the hut, the owner steps outside, and, wetting the tips of his first and fourth fingers to make himself invisible, he points these fingers at the wind and cries out, "Your mother-in-law is here". Whereupon the wind flies off in another direction!

We spent a memorable week at Mwenzo, largely occupied, as was fitting, with an old-fashioned Highland communion. On Wednesday the people began to come trooping in, bringing their provisions with them. Those who could not find accommodation in the neighbouring villages built grass shelters for themselves around the church. The old school-church being quite insufficient for the meetings, a square stockade was erected at the side of the building, lined round with eight-foot high grass, and there, every day, morning and afternoon, a congregation gathered of 600 to 1000.

The collections taken were mostly in kind, although there was an orthodox plate for money, and one day a boy, just home from the mines, handed in a sovereign for the building of the new church. A huge rough box stood in front of the speakers' platform, into which the women poured baskets of grain. It was characteristic of the African that no attempt was made to keep the different kinds of grain separate, but beans and monkey-nuts were mingled with *milesi* and *amasaka*. After the service the elders proceeded



to riddle them out, much as their brother-elders in the home church separate the silver from the copper. On asking John Abanda for a sample of the collection, I received seven or eight envelopes, each containing a different kind of grain, all duly labelled. A modest charge of one penny was made by the careful treasurer to defray the cost of the envelopes.

John was a busy man in those days, for besides a general oversight of things, he had in hand the building of the new church. Under his charge 100,000 bricks had been made by free labour, and now a handsome edifice, with chancel, nave, and transepts, stood ready for the roof. The roofing tiles lay drying in the sun, and John was destined to have the triumph of his life over that roofing.

Besides the communion services we had various other functions. There was a school exhibition, with its inevitable accompaniment of song-singing and speech-making. The Deputy had the honour of distributing the school prizes, which consisted of strips of calico and cakes of soap. But Maisie easily outshone him as Lady Bountiful. Armed with a basket and a spoon, she went round the infant class and gave each of her little chums a spoonful of *salt*. This was by way of a bag of chocolates, and was licked up with the keenest relish. When we came out of school we found a tiny mite with a tinier mite on her back, and the said tinier mite was bawling lustily because, being hidden behind her sister's shoulder, she had been overlooked in the distribution of salt. Maisie with her spoon brought a speedy and effective remedy. Nobody, so far as one saw, was crying for soap!

Next came the excitement of three marriages, and nothing could be more praiseworthy than the care of the Doctor in getting the brides properly assorted. They came stumbling into church with heads completely shrouded in bluish calico. They persistently refused either to show their faces or answer to their names. There was the possibility of a tragical mix up, till the Doctor, equal to all emergencies, gently but firmly opened their veils and peeped in to ascertain who was who. After that they were duly ranged in

order—Marco and Mary in the middle, Jacob and Alice on the left, Jotam and Miriam on the right—and the ceremony proceeded. A naked little urchin was observed to thrust himself prominently to the front, and, as it turned out, he played the important rôle of “responsible relative” of one of the brides. Mary’s father, being a heathen, refused to “darken the church door,” but he sent this young hopeful to say there were no objections on the part of the family. At the close of the ceremony the three bridegrooms led their shrouded and stumbling brides out of church by the hand and moved off amid the hearty cheers of the onlookers.

The Sabbath was a high day. Communion was dispensed in the church, but the numbers outside were much greater than those inside. They crowded round the door and peered in at all the windows with, naturally, a good deal of commotion. To relieve the pressure and distraction I was sent out with a teacher, Peter Sinkala, who had been translating my addresses day by day most efficiently, and after drawing off the crowd to the shade of some trees, we conducted a second service. In the afternoon we met in the stockade for a baptismal service, at which Peter and his wife came with others to receive Christian baptism for their children. It must ever be an inspiring thing for a missionary to baptize adult converts from heathenism, but surely still more inspiring to see, as that day at Mwenzo, a long line of Christian parents bringing their children to the font. It spoke impressively of the growth of Christian homes, with all that that means in the safeguarding of young lives and the building up of a new social order. A quiet evening service in the Mission-house brought the day to a close.

On Monday morning we were early astir. Some of us were about to start on a long trek to the south, while the natives who had come to communion from distant villages were packing up to return home. In these circumstances the service of thanksgiving was held at 7 A.M., and there our words of farewell were spoken. At the close Peter Sinkala uttered a few sentences, first in Chinamwanga and then in English, expressing gratitude for the visit of a deputy from the Home Church and for all that the Church

had done for them through her Mission. Then he gave out in Chinamwanga the hymn, "God be with you till we meet again," which was sung to the old familiar tune. I confess I was deeply touched. A congregation in Scotland had sung the same hymn when I took leave of them, and here was a congregation in the heart of Africa singing it and making me feel as if I were leaving home again. So full is the world of kindly hearts. "Till we meet again," so they sang. Never in this world can I hope to see them again, but never can I possibly forget them. And when at last they shall come from the east and from the west and from the north and from the south, one rejoices to believe there will be friends not a few from Mwenzo.

Within a few weeks the war had broken out, and, strangely enough, the Winamwanga were among the first to feel the storm. The Doctor, on hurrying across to his friend the magistrate at Fife, found him drilling half a dozen native police, his total force, while the Germans were reported to be advancing with a field gun and savage hordes of Ruga-ruga. The situation was hopeless, and the Rhodesian Government, unable to send support, ordered the abandonment of all the country for 100 miles back from the frontier—another Belgium left to the tender mercies of the Huns. As Mwenzo is but nine miles from the frontier the peril was imminent, and the Doctor, his family, and people were compelled to take refuge in the bush. The faithful John Abanda, however, stayed on. War or no war, he had his beloved church to roof. There also the situation was critical. For unless the roof were on before the rainy season the walls of sun-dried brick would dissolve into mud. Mwenzo stands high and commands a wide view over the surrounding country. At night John slept in the bush, and in the morning, after making sure that the coast was clear, he hurried on with the roofing. The store was plundered, the neighbouring villages were raided and blood was shed, but the heroic fellow stuck to his task, and before the rains broke the church was roofed.

After twenty-two months of exile the people of Mwenzo returned and found the church intact. The German com-

mander, to do him justice, had said to his followers, " I have no quarrel with the church. Leave it alone." A service of dedication was held, and a communion, the first since we parted from them. Alas, the man who had the best right to be there was absent. John Abanda had caught fever and died. But an event happened of strange and thrilling interest. From the northern section of the tribe, now delivered from German tyranny, there marched in on the appointed day a little company of native Christians who had come to celebrate their brotherhood in the faith and their re-union as a people at the Christian feast of love. It is probably the only instance yet recorded where former subjects of Britain and of Germany have thus met in holy fellowship, and it is remarkable that it should have happened in the heart of Darkest Africa.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### MAISIE AND HER FRIENDS.

PRETTY fair-haired Ivonne Jalla has her home among the Barotse, far up the Zambesi, above the Victoria Falls. When her parents were going on furlough to their native Waldensian valleys, little Ivonne asked if the children there were black, and when they said "No," she burst into tears at the dreadful prospect of a land where the children were all white. One was not surprised to hear the story from her mother, for black and white make the jolliest of playmates. Maisie and Harry at Mwenzo were inseparable, and one recalls many pretty pictures of them. The day of our homecoming, when Maisie came to meet us, after she had hugged her father, she ran to Harry, whom she had not seen for weeks, and "coo-cooed" him in the most delightful fashion. Every day they played together in the garden, all unconscious of the gulf that would slowly widen and yawn between them. "A perfect little gentleman," was the emphatic verdict of Maisie's mother when questioned about Harry. No, she could not wish a nicer playmate for her child, so careful was he and so loyal.

Maisie is the darling of the Winamwanga, a sweet, resourceful little lady, who rules her devoted subjects with easy sway. Perfectly familiar with every native idiom and shade of expression, she is capable of taking the Doctor to task after his sermon. "Father, you said so and so," glibly uttering some weird combination of sounds.

"And what should I have said?" replies the Doctor meekly. "You should have said this," repeating the words with some imperceptible change of inflection.

I fell an easy prey to her ladyship. We sat down to a

game of Halma. After a few moves I remarked with stupid condescension, "You are a wise little girl. I see that you can play."

"You needn't say that," replied the little maid serenely, "for I am wiser than you think." And so she was, for she won the game.

In the flight from the Germans Maisie was lost. She had been carried by mistake to the wrong village. After hours of anxious search her father found her sitting in a native hut and quite at home. "Why have you been so long of coming?" she said. "I was thinking of sending somebody to look for you." That was Maisie all over, innocent, serene, fearless. And indeed what had she to fear, when every one of these black men around her would sooner have died than have harm come to a hair of her head.

In certain circles in South Africa a deep mistrust of the native prevails. Children, it is affirmed, are never safe in their charge, not for an hour. This spirit is conspicuously absent in missionary circles and with no disastrous result. Love wakens in response to love, and trust meets the reward of loyalty. Especially in remoter parts the children of the Mission-house have none but native playmates, and very tender links are forged that bind the missionary to his people. One cherishes delicious memories of these unconscious little missionaries, wise beyond their years, shrewdly observant and original in their ways, and daily in danger of being spoiled by an adoring people. One remembers dear wee Tommy Innes gazing in wonder at the unfamiliar process of shaving, and then remarking with great gravity, "My father does not wash that end of his face". One remembers also two tiny maidens, one from South, and one from Central Africa, discussing the subject of snakes. "Our snakes run after you," quoth Peggy with dilating eyes, "and bite you and kill you." To which Monica replies airily, "Our snakes are the other way about. They run away from you." "Our snakes" was delightfully characteristic of the proprietary rights which these little people assume over every living thing. Even snakes are included in their kingdom.

Hardly if at all less interesting were their little black friends and playmates. They bear a ridiculously close resemblance to the children of the home-land. With but little imagination they might be taken for the same, with faces more thoroughly blackened than usual and all superfluous clothing discarded. The black baby sits on the ground, like his white brother, solemnly investigating straws and chewing everything within his reach. The howl of genuine horror with which he greets the apparition of a white face is most instructive, though humbling. It is good to see ourselves as others, even black babies, see us. We had hitherto looked on black faces with a complete sense of complacency. It had never occurred to us even to put the question whether any could prefer a black face to a white. But Master Baby suddenly vociferates, "I do," and he hides in a dusky bosom from the sight of your pale hideousness. His black sister watches over him with anxious, motherly care, and when relieved of her charge she plays at houses in the most approved girlish way. She builds the tiny walls of clay and decorates them with some sort of whitewash. Inside she makes a fireplace, consisting of two hobs of clay-like upturned flowerpots, all in imitation of her mother's hut. Here, with a few broken earthen pots for furniture, she will amuse herself through the long sunny hours. Very shy is she at first, but, when her confidence is gained, very winning and affectionate. Shall I ever forget the choir of tiny singers at Mwenzo, the two Jessies and little Emily and the others, all Maisie's friends and mine, how we sang for the hundredth time, with marching and hand-clapping, the Winamwanga version of "A hunting we will go". A most innocent version it was, and ran thus: "We will hunt the rabbit, we will catch it, we will take it home, and then we'll let it go." Far away in Broken Hill the memory of that childish song brought a smile to the face of a Mwenzo carrier, down with fever and writhing in pain. May we never be less happy than we were then.

Boys, of course, will be boys all the world over, but not till they are seen in black nakedness, sparring, tripping, and larking, does one realise the absolutely ineradicable essence



MAISIE AND HARRY

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LITTLE HOUSEWIVES

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KAPUTA AND KAWOMBWÉ

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IN KAFWIMBE'S STOCKADE

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of universal boy nature. At every village they used to gather round, thrusting themselves among their elders and listening open mouthed to the colloquy between the Doctor and the chiefs. Happening on one occasion to see a naked urchin standing in front of the rest and particularly absorbed in the conversation, I playfully pinched his ear. Quick as thought he drew his fist and wheeled round on me, only to shrink abashed as suddenly when he saw his mistake. The shout of derisive laughter from his chums that greeted his discomfiture was genuinely boyish. Be sure the whole village would hear the story of how black Tommy was going to spar with the *Mzungu*.

Sometimes in an idle hour I amused myself by writing on the chest or back of a few of the boys some inscription or design. A hard straw makes a whitish mark on their black skin, very like the mark made by a pencil on a slate. The boys who were thus adorned would delightedly examine one another, and then march off proudly to exhibit themselves about the village.

The cycle was an endless source of interest. Occasionally some of the older boys volunteered to wheel it, and once a daring spirit ventured to mount, but as soon as the cycle began to move he dived frantically into the long grass. Our departure from a village in the morning had all the commotion and excitement of a circus procession.

Frequently there is a bit of decent path out of the village, where one can spin along for a few hundred yards. We would mount and ride off at a snail's pace. Immediately the long-legged boys would rush on in front to show how they could race the cycle. Then the girls, too, when they saw how easy it looked, began to get in front, and among them were generally some stout young matrons lumping along with babies on their backs. When they had all got settled down in the track the cyclist would suddenly ring his bell and rush forward at top speed. It was like the sudden dash of a motor-car scattering a flock of chickens. With shouts and screams they leaped aside into the grass, and when they found they were not really killed they had the sensation of a lifetime. Occasionally, if the path

continued good, the whole performance was repeated, and then with farewell clapping of hands they returned to the village.

It all lives in one's memory as a sunny time among a simple, kindly people, whom it was easy to love. One might have fancied that the child-life of the villages was for ever merry and care-free, had not one caught glimpses and hints of the dark underside. The primitive hut can never be a home. The older boys of the village are herded together in the boys' hut, and the older girls in the girls' hut, whereby is bred licence and a premature knowledge of sin. The fine meshed net of heathen custom early closes round and holds them fast. So much the more deeply did one feel the need of rescuing all this wealth and winsomeness of young life from the dread gulf of ignorance and superstition into which, if unaided, it is doomed to sink.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE LITTLE GREY THREAD.

WE are on the road again, travelling south. The Doctor has been commissioned to prospect for the site of a new Mission-station. In a week we hope to reach Chinsali, in three weeks, Chitambo. Our route lies along the great plateau of North-Eastern Rhodesia, a broad ridge which forms the backbone of Central Africa. It rises out of a wide sea of forest, and down its sloping sides the streams flow—on the right hand to the Congo, on the left to the Zambesi. Through the trees one catches glimpses, now to the east now to the west, of far-spreading wooded valleys, and occasionally from some abrupt rocky eminence an immense view is had of forest, forest, leagues of forest. Surveying such a scene one has the exhilarating sensation of standing on the roof of the Continent. The slope of the plateau is towards the south, so that with gentle undulations it sinks a thousand feet from Mwenzo to Chitambo. The monotonous succession of rolling ridge and *dambo* is far different from the rugged contour of the hills about Lake Nyasa. Pawky old Kayira, the Professor's henchman, sighs and says, "Ah, what a happy home we have in Nyasaland, up and down, up and down".

Along this ridge the Cape to Cairo railway will thunder presently, up through the hinterland of German East Africa, up through Uganda and down the Nile. But as yet the only road is a little grey thread that winds through the forest. It, too, has a wonder all its own. Worn by the soft tread of naked feet, it has never an inch of superfluous width. Modesty and persistence are its distinguishing marks. Rarely visible for more than a few yards at a



time, overhung by the rank grass, winding in and out among the trees, threatening to expire round the next bend, always yielding but always persisting, it conquers the illimitable forest and guides the traveller to his destination. Here is a little segment of it. Emerging from behind that tree in the most casual way and disappearing round this other, it seems to signify nothing and lead nowhere, a mere line one might step over unnoticed, yet patiently follow it and it will lead—that way to Cairo, this way to the Cape. It is a gross mistake to speak of the pathless forest. The forest is a network of little threads like this, running from village to village as true as a turnpike road. When a village shifts, the little grey threads alter their course, but they are always there. The making and mending of them is in wonderful harmony with the primeval silence of the wilds. With never a click of roadman's hammer, nor angular quartz, nor ponderous crushing wheels, but by the soft, soft pad of naked feet the path is made. Not more silently does the hand of Nature obliterate the deserted path. Mysteriously the old is gone and the new is come in its place without the disturbance of a forest leaf. Not so does the white man construct his road of steel, but tearing up, crashing down, thundering, bursting outrageously through.

It has been set down to the indolence of the African that his forest path winds round every obstacle and never boldly thrusts it aside. A few days on the path brings one into perfect sympathy with the African. The obstacle is probably a fallen tree, too heavy to be moved. Even if it be lighter it is hardly to be expected that the weary wayfarer, with a long road in front of him, and perhaps an anxious eye on the declining sun, shall forthwith lay down his load and clear the path for the unknown man who is to follow. Let the righteous person, who has removed every banana skin from the pavement, and shut every gate behind him, cast the first stone. Besides, it is the African's way. Like his forest path he bends but he persists. Through ages of oppression, of slavery, of the dominance of superior races he has persisted, and like his path he will win through to

the end. No fear of his disappearance. Out through all the tangle of history he will make his way and emerge at last.

It is the finest big game country in the world we are travelling through. But the formidable denizens of the forest are entirely invisible. On the approach of the noisy line of carriers they quietly clear out or lie low, and we jog along the path with hardly a thought of their presence. Reports of them are frequent. In this village the headman is from home disposing of the lion's skin they killed yesterday. In that other village a lion suddenly jumped in this afternoon and picked up a dog. More serious news comes from a district to the south, where three men have been killed. These stories tend to get on the carriers' nerves as they sit round the camp fire at night and tell the tales in their own dramatic way. "The lion looked up the tree and said, 'Who is that up there? I will get him too,' and it clawed him down." But these lurid tales are all forgotten in the morning sun, and they take the road again without misgiving. A few insignificant footprints on the path are interpreted to mean that a leopard has just passed. Occasionally the sharp, heavy hoof of the rhino is met, or the ponderous spoor of the elephant. But still nothing is seen, and even a long morning of careful stalking in the *dambos* may be without result. On the other hand you may run into a lion round the next corner, but until it happens you find it impossible to realise the danger. In reality the danger is negligible. In the company of a few carriers you are perfectly safe, for the king of the forest has as little stomach for an encounter as you have. Of course, if you went for a solitary moonlight walk it might be different, but you have sense enough to keep near the blazing camp fires. Incredible as it may seem, men have lived a quarter of a century in tropical Africa and never seen a lion, and it would be an easy matter, if one were so disposed, to travel from the Cape to Cairo and never see so much as a bush pig.

Every morning we are astir in the grey dawn. Our tents are quickly taken down and packed for the journey. Every

carrier knows his load. It may be a roll of bedding or a tin box or a couple of deck chairs or a food basket. He may have grumbled over it at first, but once it is his he sticks to it and will not, if he can help it, carry any other. Extraordinary is the patience and thoroughness with which every morning he ties and reties his load, with rope if he has it, and if not, with pliable bark, knowing all the while that the whole must be untied again at night. No fear of anything getting broken or lost. "Give the African your best china," says Selous, the great hunter, "and tell him it is fragile. Let him pack it up in his own way and he will bring it in safe every night."

Ere we have finished breakfast most of the men are well on the way. Only a few remain whose loads consist of the table, chairs, and dishes. Soon we are all on the road. The long grass drenches us with dew at every step, but as in bathing, one does not mind it after the first plunge. In an hour or two, when the sun is up, we shall be thoroughly dried. Gradually we overtake the carriers and push on up the line which straggles out for a mile or two through the forest. As we pass a few of the men the Doctor happens to sneeze. Turning, he reproaches them humorously. "You did not say to me, 'The evil thing has gone out of you,'" as native politeness required them to say when a friend sneezes. They looked abashed. "We forgot," they said. "We are sorry."

With the help of our cycles we reach the first village ahead of the men and spend half an hour in it. If there is a school we halt there and hold an informal meeting. The Doctor presides and interprets. The Deputy, being duly introduced, gives as best he can his word of exhortation. He commends the villagers on their enterprise in having a school. Where there is no school he laments their backwardness. Often he is thrilled by the singing of the twenty-third Psalm, or the recitation of the Lord's Prayer, by the children of villages where there is not a single Christian. Everywhere he sees fields white to the harvest.

Mid-day brings a grateful rest, perhaps on the bank of some clear mountain stream, more often in a village school,

or on a reed mat spread under the shady side of a hut. After quenching our thirst with great draughts of tea, we have leisure to stroll round and observe the life of the village. Here a hut is building; here a woman is on her knees grinding *milesi* meal between two stones. She grasps the upper stone in her hands and pounds the grain like a Scots housewife rolling oatcakes. Here is another moulding an earthen pot; here a girl is painfully shaving off her mother's eyebrows with a piece of hoop iron for a razor. Presently the musician of the village comes with his *kalimba* to play in our honour. An old man, and half blind, he croaks out a few syllables to signify that we are chiefs and big bulls. Then, as an interlude, he strums a few notes on his instrument. Being apparently dramatist as well as musician he follows up his song with a play. *Act I.*—Lighting the fire (he gathers a few sticks and pretends to make fire by friction). *Act II.*—Burnt by a spark (he claps his hand to his head, hops about in agony, and then belabours a boy as the cause of the accident). *Act III.*—Eating dinner (he snatches chips out of the seeming fire, drops them, blows on his fingers, picks them up and nibbles them). *Curtain!* Finally he sells his *kalimba* for a shilling and retires from the stage.

We fare on through the heat of the afternoon and again begin to overtake the line of patient carriers. Some are sitting beside a stream, bathing their feet and rubbing off the callosities with pieces of sandstone. They know by experience the agony when hardened skin cracks on a long journey. All have a notion more or less accurate of the distance of our halting-place, and they time themselves to arrive before sunset. Sometimes, however, expectation is sadly disappointed.

On one occasion we were badly taken in. Coffee was the man who was chiefly to blame. How he came by that name is a mystery, but he was a big sturdy Wemba and ought to have known his own country. He promised us a convenient halting-place at a village just beyond the Manchja River. Towards sundown, however, he began to think that the Manchja might be two hours away. The Doctor and I



pushed on to look for the river and village while the Professor waited to hurry up the carriers. The Manchias proved to be a broad, deep, stream crossed by a rustic bridge hung on great wires. Part of the bridge was down, the rest was hanging at an angle of 45 degrees, supported by the swaying wires. The village was a good two miles beyond the river. An hour after dark, and it was very dark, only Jumari and the cycle-boys had come in. There was no sign of the carriers nor any prospect of supper. Jumari lit his lamp and volunteered to go back to the river if some of the villagers would go with him. Twice he started, only to reappear, saying they had deserted him. As the situation seemed impossible, I took the lamp while Jumari and another man took their spears and we returned to the river. We arrived in the nick of time. The carriers had reached the other bank, and groping along on the bridge had just come to the gap. In the flare of the lantern they looked like a broken line of ants that had lost their way and were feeling anxiously about. It took the best part of an hour to get everything slung across, and as much more to get into camp.

"Were you nervous going down to the river?" inquired the Doctor, as we sat at a very late supper.

"No," I said. "It did not strike me that way."

"H'm! You have not had your nerve shaken by a lion yet," he remarked.

As it happened, the very next day we encountered a lion. The brute slunk away across a *dambo* in deliberate fashion and with a surly, backward look, as much as to say, "Yes, I'm going, but don't hurry me". I turned to my friend and said, "You're right, Doctor. I'm not sure that I would go to the Manchias again to-night."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### ROUND THE CAMP-FIRE.

"SPEAKING of lions," said the Doctor, as we drew our chairs round the camp-fire, "you can never tell what a lion will do. Generally they won't face the light, but I have known one leap on to a veranda where two men were dining, with lamps lit and servants about, and pick up a dog. You never realise how they come nosing about after dark till you have experience of it, and then you don't forget. One night I went out to see who was rummaging about. Seeing nothing, I came in and shut the door about half a second before the lion's paws struck it. That lion must have been pretty hungry, for he stayed all night on the veranda gnawing some old horns. It was a close shave."

The evening hour by the camp-fire is the crown of the day, the rich reward at the end of the road, the hour for yarn and song and drowsy reading beside the blazing logs, when all the bustle of making camp has settled down. If the camp is pitched in the forest, it has to be stockaded round. Young trees are felled skilfully, branches lopped off and piled up till a space is enclosed sufficient for the tents and the camp-fires. If, as usually happens, there is a village to camp in, an open space is selected and swept clean. The village crier, by order of the chief, proclaims aloud, "Let the boys bring firewood, let the women bring water". Obediently the village boys trot off to the forest and return with great dry logs; while the women, laying aside their work, take each an earthen pot and file off to the stream or well. As if these kindly services were of no account, the head men bring a present of fowls or meal or sweet potatoes. This the Doctor receives at his tent door, and makes a

suitable return in calico. Thus the claims of hospitality are satisfied and our friendship sealed.

Washed from the dust and sweat of the road we sit down to our evening meal. Even were our appetites less keen it must be pronounced excellent. Where it came from and how prepared is a mystery known only to Jonah, the cook. A royal fire of logs is blazing near us, for the night air grows chilly. At smaller fires the various groups of carriers are gathered round their pots of porridge. Native meal is stirred in till the porridge stick can stir no more, when the thick mass is served on a dish of leaves and bolted in great lumps. The only relish is a few herbs, or, very rarely, a scrap of flesh. The monotony of this diet breeds an acute craving for something tasty, such as kungu fly. One evening special interest centres in a big boiling pot, full of objects resembling beans. I inquire as to its contents. For answer, Nkufwela, the capitao, a man of few words and none of them English, picks out something and holds it towards me in his broad palm. It is a great hairy caterpillar. I beat a hasty retreat, not waiting to see the feast. Doubtless it is all a matter of taste. Each, in our own way, we are fed and satisfied, and now for the hour of well-earned rest.

Ah, those evenings in the camp, how bewitching is their memory! The weird mingling of light and shade, as the sun sets and the stars come out, might belong to a world of romance. There is a rich central glow where the big camp-fire blazes and flings glancing lights on the dark faces of the men. The village huts are in deep shade, broken here and there by the smaller fires. Beyond them the dim encircling forest closes round, and above the dark tree tops the orange sky shades into pale green. The Southern Cross comes out, first of all the stars. Seen thus at sunset, all alone in the southern sky, it appears most impressive and significant. No wonder the first bold voyagers on southern seas hailed it as their star of Bethlehem. To them it was indeed a heavenly sign, a token that here was no new world of monstrous birth, but a land presided over by the Cross.

Darkness falls over the village and forest, and the sky glitters with stars. The Doctor has the kindest way with

the men, and does not forbid them, as most would, to approach our fire. So they gather round in a semicircle as close as they can sit. The Doctor sets them talking and quietly listens, putting in a word now and then, and gently opening page after page of that sealed book, the native mind. The men are at their ease, they rehearse dramatically the incidents of the day, they discuss their customs and exchange banter. Old Kayira is an immovable conservative. No woman, he argues, should sit down to eat with men. "Why not?" some of the others ask. Kayira shakes his head. He cannot give a particular reason, but he protests it would never do.

Kalulu, the cycle-boy, is usually a prominent figure in these debates. He is one of the ugliest, nakedest, jolliest, most lovable fellows of the lot. How he came to be called Kalulu is a story worth telling, as an illustration of the ease with which an African will change his name. One day, instead of following the cycle, Matekenya, as he was then called, was told off to carry a load, while Samson was appointed cycle-boy. Samson, however, quite belied his name. He lingered discreetly in the rear, and gave no help all day. When we gathered round the camp-fire at night, I conveyed to Matekenya that he was the boy for me, and Samson was no good.

"You run like a rabbit (kalulu)," I said. "Samson runs like a tortoise."

Matekenya jumped up, frisked about to show the agility of the rabbit, then lay down and gave the drollest imitation of the gait of the tortoise, till he lay helpless with laughter and had to be admonished that Samson's temper had limits. Then, addressing the circle of carriers round the fire, he exclaimed, "You hear what he has said. I shall ever after be known as the boy who ran after the *Bwana* like a rabbit."

"Very good," I said. "Your name is Kalulu."

He bowed low, clapping his hands, as their custom is, on receiving a gift.

"Thank you, sir," he said. Then, to the company, "The *Bwana* has given me a new name, and he will



confirm it with a small present. I am no longer Matekenya, I am Kalulu." And Kalulu he remained to the end of the chapter.

He was a great chatterbox, and could do full justice to his tale. He had once been in the service of a Government official, to whom, by his own account, he had been absolutely indispensable. Standing in front of the men, he described his work with lively gestures.

"I swept his room, and made his bed, and brushed his boots, and dusted his desk, and sorted his papers, and ———"

"And wiped his nose," interrupted the Doctor, who had been listening unobserved. At this sally a burst of universal laughter compelled the orator to break off his discourse, and subside into the background.

Dear, simple-hearted Kalulu, many a happy hour we had together on the road. He was not a church-member, nor even a catechumen, but he carried with him a copy of the *Ivangeli wa Johanné* (Gospel of John), in which he read his daily portion, and when a lion roared horribly in the gloaming, he said valiantly, "The lion cannot harm us. Are we not men of God?"

Sometimes we had a sing-song in the evening, for there were a few hymn-books in the company, and perhaps one or two in the village. The programme was invariably sacred, except on one occasion. It was at Mpumachibaba, a big village in the Wisa country, that a more ambitious concert was attempted. The Mwenzo boys rendered their version of "John Brown's body," and the Deputy, in a weak moment, was induced to sing at the request of the villagers, who professed an ardent longing to hear his voice. "Some good-going song," said the Doctor. "Jingle Bells" was the response, and it survived the first verse famously, with the accompaniment of hand-clapping to the chorus. But at the second verse the situation became irresistibly absurd. Scene, darkest Africa; audience of natives listening open-mouthed, while grave Church Deputy exhorts them, fortunately in an unknown tongue, to "go it while you're young!" Result, sudden convulsion of laughter, in which the audience

heartily, but uncomprehendingly, join. By way of atonement, the Deputy renders *God save the King*.

But these hymns, one never wearied of them. The sacred and familiar music of "Rock of Ages," "Nearer my God to Thee," and "The Sweet by and by," wedded to strange words and sung in that far-off land, fell on the ear with singular pathos, and sent surges of feeling through the heart. Yet, one could well understand how there are ears in which these sounds would be maddening. When the wanderer, who has half-forgotten the sanctities of home, finds himself serenaded in the heart of heathendom by the holiest strains of his childhood, it is as if the blessed dead rose from the grave and confronted him. With a furious oath he springs to his feet and bids that canting cease. Thus it comes to pass that the psalm-singing native is a great abomination to the Egyptians.

The circle round the fire was never rude or obtrusive, and many a quiet talk we had on things African. Often we spoke of the trials and rewards of missionary life, of the seeming hopelessness of it, and yet of the evidences that accumulate, pointing to the co-operation of a Power other than human, a Power that touches chords in savage breasts, mysterious as the wind passing over the strings of an Æolian harp. One story told was perhaps as remarkable as any recorded in the history of Christian experience.

A Church member at Mwenzo had fallen from his profession and returned to heathenism and debauchery. Being present one night at a beer-drinking, as he raised the pot to his lips, he suddenly let it fall and rushed out of the hut. For two days and nights he remained shut up in his own hut, and the neighbours, gathering about the door, heard only sobs and cries.

"He is bewitched," they said.

"No," replied the unhappy man, "but God has spoken to me."

At length, in calmer mood, he came to the missionary and told his experience. As he lifted the pot of beer to his lips he suddenly heard a voice, as from heaven, saying to him,

“What are you doing? Are you not my child?” From that day he lived a changed and consistent Christian life.

It might have been a page out of Bunyan's autobiography. Unbelief was rebuked. One looked across the fire at the ring of dark faces, and round about on the shadowy forms of the huts, saying softly, “God is in this place, and I knew it not”.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE HUSBAND OF A HUNDRED WIVES.

KAFWIMBÉ is the name, or hereditary title, of this hero, and he is the paramount chief of the Wiwa. Native history records that the son of an old chief of the Winamwanga stole the royal drum, the emblem of authority, and fleeing south with his followers set up for himself. This action earned for them the name of the Wiwa, or thieves. On the partition of Africa, the headquarters of the paramount chief of the Winamwanga fell within the German sphere, which left Kafwimbé the most important chief on the British side of the border.

The holder of the title was a little, elderly man, of quiet manner and with shrewd, brown eyes. We found him in a populous village, prettily situated in an open valley, surrounded by rocky, wooded hills. The village was undefended, but the residence of the chief was surrounded by a high stockade of irregular shape. Within the stockade were two courtyards, the first containing the numerous huts of the chief's wives and children, the second containing the chief's own hut, with a few grainstores. Into this inner courtyard the chief's wives were not allowed to come, though his sons and headmen appeared to enter without ceremony.

Here we had our first audience. Kafwimbé and the Doctor occupied the only two chairs that the royal establishment could boast, the Professor and the Deputy sat each on a drum. A miscellaneous crowd of boys and headmen squatted on the ground, while numbers of wives peered over the stockade. The most striking feature of the chief's attire was a head-dress or crown of bead work. It formed a sort of skull-cap, with a line of five ornaments running from above



the brow to the back of the neck. These had exactly the appearance of five bolts driven into the chief's head, with nuts screwed on to them. The bolts were of black bead-work, as thick as a man's finger and projecting an inch from the skull. The nuts were round, white shells, of a kind which the Arabs used to bring from the coast and sell for a slave each. The old chief was in the most friendly mood, and presently despatched one of his attendants for a little packet of lions' claws, which he presented to us.

"Is it court etiquette to offer him a pinch of snuff?" asked the Deputy.

"By all means," replied the Doctor.

A native snuff-box, like a long-necked bottle, was produced and handed over. After the old man had done justice to it, he passed it to the headmen who sat round his chair. Afterwards, when we visited the wives' enclosure, they begged the box and emptied it.

The Doctor's acquaintance with Kafwimbé was of ten years' standing, and on his first visit a curious incident occurred in that same courtyard. The chief had heard of the mystery of reading, and wished to satisfy himself of the truth of the report. Had the Doctor any natives with him who could do this wonderful thing? Yes, here were two teachers. Kafwimbé, having sent one of them out to a distance in charge of one of his sons, whispered a sentence to the other, who wrote it down. The chief grasped the slip of paper in his hand, sent off the second teacher and recalled the first.

"What did I say?" he asked, showing the paper. The teacher glanced at it and gave the answer, to the complete bewilderment of the onlookers. Kafwimbé declared he must have a school in his village to teach his people this magic art. Afterwards, in deference to the opposition of his headmen, he abandoned the idea. He sent, however, two of his sons to Mwenzo to be taught to read. One of these is now a teacher in the Mission, and in course of time a school was built in Kafwimbé's own village.

We camped at the school, and there in the evening the chief came to pay his return call. Most of the villagers

accompanied him, and we began with a short service. Kafwimbé's teacher son led the singing, and chose for the opening psalm, "Lord bless and pity us". This, in view of the circumstances of the family, appeared singularly appropriate if somewhat personal. After the service the villagers retired, but the chief sat conversing with us by the camp-fire till late at night. The old man was not without a due sense of courtesy. He produced his snuff-box, a neat little silver box, which he handed to the embarrassed Deputy, who was compelled to make pretence of enjoying a hearty pinch. The chief inquired how many children he had, and on learning there were but four, he remarked that the Deputy was evidently not a big chief at home—a sound conclusion, doubtless, though based on dubious premises. When asked how many children he had, Kafwimbé could not even give an estimate, and appeared to think it beneath his dignity to keep count. Of the number of his wives, too, he was doubtful. A score or two were at headquarters, the rest were scattered through his territory. Many of them have been literally thrust upon him as embarrassing presents from villages that sought his favour. It must surely be an experience, almost without parallel, when the old man goes on tour, to rediscover everywhere his forgotten wives.

He had heard of Lake Nyasa, but never seen it, and as for the ocean he could form no conception of it. He talked very readily about old times. The land, he said, used to be full of people, but now there were but few. Many of his tribe had been killed by the Wemba and the Ngoni. It was Mlozi who egged them on. He showed them guns and cloth, saying, "Bring me slaves and you will get these". When Mlozi was hanged all his people said it was good.

He admitted that the white man had pacified the country, but he manifested no enthusiasm for British rule. That, perhaps, is more than could reasonably be expected. The white man's coming has robbed him of his power, and the meanest of his people knows it. The boys returning from the mines can swagger in his presence with impunity. The tribesmen are not compelled to do obeisance to him. In the old days, every man who entered his presence had to

prostrate himself on his back with his head towards the chief, and salute him with handclapping. On the Doctor's first visit every one of his carriers conformed to this custom. On the present occasion only one was observed to do it.

The native policeman is now a power in the land, and Kafwimbé himself is liable to answer for his deeds. A short time ago he was summoned on the grave charge of causing the death of one of his wives. The poor woman, being taken ill in the field, was hurrying home, and for some reason crossed the forbidden courtyard, where Kafwimbé, happening to meet her, struck her a blow with his staff. Next day the woman died. In due time the native policeman appeared and said, "Give me a cow and nothing more will be heard of it". Kafwimbé, after some demur, agreed. The affair, however, coming to the magistrate's ears, the policeman was punished and the chief had to stand his trial. The whole tribe was thrown into a state of the wildest excitement, but, fortunately, proof was forthcoming that the blow given did not contribute to the woman's death, and the chief was acquitted.

No wonder he has little enthusiasm for British rule, and probably thinks in his inmost heart that the old days, with all their bloodshed and slave-raiding, were better. There he is, a dethroned monarch, a degraded dignitary, a stockaded survival of the old order. He finds the new world quite beyond his depth. At his age he cannot keep pace with it. Yes, he has been trying to read, he says, but his book is lost. Poor old heathen. A chief now only in name, he has outlived the day of his glory. Soon he must pass, his pitiful stockade be broken down, and his harem scattered, to give place to other, and, let us hope, better ways.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE BOMA.

THE Boma is a name of rich and varied significance. Everything governmental in Nyasaland and North-Eastern Rhodesia is comprehended under the term. The residence of each local magistrate is the Boma for that district, and what the Boma says is law in all the villages within a radius of fifty miles.

The typical Boma consists of a low-roofed bungalow, with an ample veranda, usually littered with rare and valuable horns. Surrounding it is an irregular group of buildings, including an office, a store, a prison, with quarters for a few native police. The whole area is cleared of undergrowth and kept scrupulously clean. The cleaning is mainly the business of the prisoners, who appear to have on the whole a fairly good time. Sentenced often for the transgression of some Government regulation, and suffering no personal disgrace nor discomfort, they accept their fate stoically as part of the mystery of the white man's rule.

At the Mpika Boma we found two Ngoni sitting on the ground waiting their trial. They had cut across the Luangwa valley, hoping to travel south with us as carriers. In so doing they had traversed a sleeping sickness area without a passport, and had come straight on to the Boma to report their offence.

"I suppose I'll have to put them in for a month," said the Boma man apologetically. "You don't really need them, do you?"

So they went to join the company who were hoeing a road.



The Boma is a wonderful institution. These lone houses in the forest, where a single white man lives with a few *askari*, 100 miles from help in case of need, may seem a frail chain with which to bind vast tracts of savagery to law and order. But the whole invisible power of the Empire is behind them, and every African knows it. Therefore, life and property are safe in Central Africa, safer perhaps than at home—a white man's life certainly safer. It might be supposed that the traveller who plunges into these forests runs some risk of being swallowed up and lost. In reality it would be easier for an elephant to go amissing on Hampstead Heath, than for a white man to disappear in British Central Africa. His passing is an event of public importance. From village to village he could be traced, and if he had done and suffered anything, it would all come out. The lone Englishman who sits at the Boma gets all the news of the countryside from his *askari*, unless they have their own reasons for concealing it. There are complicated game laws, for instance, the various licenses permitting the shooting of various kinds of game. It might seem as if the hunter in these vast forests could laugh at game laws, yet these laws are enforced. The Doctor, succumbing one day to a temptation which no sportsman could resist, shot a fine eland, an animal not included in his license. He immediately announced his intention of reporting himself to the Boma at Serenjë on his way back.

"They would be sure to hear of it at any rate," he added, feeling that he was only making a virtue of necessity.

The Serenjë Boma was seventy miles away.

The doctor was evidently a *persona grata* at every Boma down the great plateau, and for his sake we received nothing but overflowing kindness from the day when we were welcomed at the frontier post with strawberries and cream. It was exceedingly gratifying to find, both in Nyasaland and North-Eastern Rhodesia, the relations between Boma and Mission so very cordial. Statements to the contrary, in the book of a recent traveller, had caused deep regret.

Things perhaps may have been different in the early days, when the Boma man was often an ex-hunter or adventurer whose moral relations with the natives placed him outside the pale of decent society. But to-day the honour of the service is above reproach. The Boma is presided over by a man of education, with the interests of the natives at heart, and pursuing towards them an enlightened policy.

It may be doubted, however, whether, in dealing with the native, there is not too much of that aloofness and hauteur which is erroneously supposed to be essential to the maintenance of the prestige of the white man. This is sometimes carried to intolerable extremes. He was a cad, of course, who, on visiting Kafwimbé's village, refused to let his eyes rest on the chief when he came to pay his respects. One pictures with indignation the detestable puppy, freshly emancipated from school, lounging grandly in his camp-chair while the old chief stands by, and after humbly waiting for a word or look of recognition, retires at last choking with mortification. What madness thus deliberately to insult and humiliate a great chief before all his people! From such actions rebellions have sprung and bloody wars, and always the native was to blame. But, apart from such extravagance of folly, the Boma man is naturally impelled to an attitude of aloofness in support of his dignity as representative of the ruling race. It may be doubted whether the loss is not greater than the gain. Vainly does a man hope by superior airs to create an impression of superiority. Pomposity is never impressive, because it is so easily seen through. And one suspects that the shrewd, minutely observant African can take the measure even of the Boma man, and knows to an ounce how much there is of genuine manhood in him. It is because, withal, there is so much genuine manhood and solid worth in the service, that the prestige of the ruling race is maintained. This doctrine of prestige, however, has become such a fetish in some quarters that one finds so high an authority as Sir Frederick Lugard making the astounding statement that the progress of the Gospel in Central Africa is ultimately dependent on the

prestige of the white man. The same Gospel which in the first age was dependent on the prestige of Galilean fishermen!

A very practical evil resulting from the policy of aloofness is the undue power it throws into the hands of the native police. This is an evil hard to avoid under any conditions, but it grows and flourishes where the Boma man holds himself aloof from his people. Take for illustration what happened at the village of Mwita. The Boma man, being on tour, camped near the village, not *in* it as a missionary would naturally have done, and as the fatherly ruler of a primitive people might well have been expected to do. His *askari* went into the village and told the villagers that he had ordered a lewd dance to be performed in his honour. The village teacher, with some of the elders, went to protest, but failed to get an audience. The Christian girls fled for refuge to the bush, and the dance was held. Next day the Boma man pursued his way in complete ignorance of what had happened. Only through the protest of the Mission was the matter reported and the guilty punished.

The native policeman and the native teacher are not always the best of friends. "The *askari* trouble us," said a group of teachers to the Deputy. "They say, 'You are nothing. Your work is nothing. We are the Government.'" The situation can easily be understood. Both parties probably suffer somewhat from swelled head. They feel themselves to be representatives, however humble, of the dread powers of Church and State. Their jealousies and squabbles, in fact, are a feeble echo of the mighty conflicts of Pope and Emperor which resounded through the Middle Ages. When the great luminaries of Christendom shall have learnt to keep within their respective spheres, then it may be hoped that their humble satellites in Central Africa, the *askari* and the *msambisgi*, will move in harmony.

The Mission, as a whole, is in a position to provide the Government with useful information and healthy criticism. The natives contrast the procedure of Church courts, where a man has freedom to speak all his mind, with the civil court where the witness is abruptly cut short, and his mean-

ing often distorted by the native interpreter. The Mission can be eyes to the Government and a voice to the people. No doubt the Boma man who is dictatorial may find it irritating to have in his district another white man of education and independent judgment, who knows the limits of his authority and the rights of the native. And where the missionary is over critical or lacking in common sense there may be just cause for irritation. Yet, on the whole, there is a pleasing atmosphere of concord, based often on warm personal friendship.

It would be too much to expect the native to love the Boma, or to appreciate what the Government is doing for him. He pays his hut tax and fails to see what return he gets for his money. The chiefs find themselves in an ambiguous position; for, while the Boma will support them in maintaining order in their villages, they cannot understand the limits of constitutional authority. They do not know exactly what their powers and duties are in relation to the new regime. Even old Kafwimbé, who had had experience of the miseries of war and slave-raiding, was not perceptibly grateful. As for the younger men, if the question were pressed on them, "why pay the white man to rule your country?" one can imagine how easily a restless spirit might be generated. The more enlightened the policy of the Government is, the more does it rise above the comprehension of an ignorant and barbarous people. So much the more urgent becomes the need, even from the point of view of the Government, for patient Christian education to enable the natives to appreciate the policy pursued, and, gradually as their fitness increases, to share in promoting it.



## CHAPTER XIX.

### A LONE OUTPOST.

A HUNDRED miles south of Mwenzo there is a little clearing in the forest beside a stream and a well. At one side of the clearing stands a church school of primitive construction, with mud walls and roof of thatch. At the opposite side, facing the church, is an equally primitive kind of cottage. It is a mere *but* and *ben*, which the missionary built with his own hands in three weeks, and where he lives with his wife and child. To the right of the cottage are two round huts, one of which serves for a dining-room, the other for a study. To the left of the cottage is another mud erection, which might appear in missionary reports under the title of a Girls' Boarding School. Here a handful of native girls are kept and trained under the eye of the missionary's wife. In the centre of the clearing is the remains of the gigantic ant hill, out of which the mud required for all these building operations was excavated. The forest closely encircles the whole.

Such is Chinsali, the most recent, as it is the most remote, of the stations of the Livingstonia Mission. The missionary in charge, Mr. McMinn, has grown grey in the service. A man of few words, with the air of a recluse, and the stoop and pallor of the student, he has seen and done and suffered much. With an intimate knowledge of the subtleties of the Bantu language, he has produced translation work of permanent value. Quiet, unemotional, and absolutely without gush, he could never thrill great audiences or regale his hearers with luscious anecdotes, yet there burns in him that still ardour of devotion which reveals itself in unwearied perseverance. After varied experiences he had

been sent to break ground in this remote and savage place, and the first-fruits of his labours were now beginning to appear.

Unhappily, his work had, for the moment, been laid under a most painful arrest. The medical committee of the Mission Council had advised that no permanent buildings should be erected in districts threatened by the dread scourge of the tsetse fly, as they might afterwards have to be abandoned. Chinsali was the station chiefly aimed at, the fly being frequent within five miles of it, and fly, too, of a very bad type, with a high percentage of sleeping sickness infection. The fly, it may be explained, is incomprehensibly erratic in its migrations and choice of habitat. It occurs in patches; it may be on one side of a river and not on the other; it may be all round a place and never enter it. But any day it may move, and where it comes it brings death—death absolute to cattle, and to human beings the appalling risk of sleeping sickness. Hence the caution of the medical committee—a caution fortified by hope. For, they argued, an effective means of fighting the fly may be discovered any day, and then the choice of a site will not be limited to a fly-free area.

Sound logic, doubtless, and wise policy, or so it appeared at the Council; but the practical working out of it at Chinsali struck the mind in a sharply different way. The site for the new station was already marked out, and thousands of bricks were moulded. The foundations for the Mission-house had been excavated on an airy spot on the hill-side, and some fruit trees were planted round. All this work, so hopefully begun, must now cease indefinitely, and wait on the solving of the mystery of the tsetse. What shattering of hopes this meant can only be understood by the man, and especially the woman, who has lived for years in a mud hut in the tropics and is expecting soon to have a decent home. It was not simply a question of comfort, but of health and life. Yet this quiet, brave man uttered no word of complaint, nor made the least parade of his troubles. Perhaps he was a little more silent than his wont as he showed us all he had done and planned to do. The fruit

trees, standing like mournful sentinels round the foundations of the house, had, in the circumstances, a pathetic aspect. The question was put, "Has your choice of site been limited by the tsetse?"

"No," was the reply. "If there were not a fly in the district this is the site I would have chosen."

The region is one of the wildest savagery, both of man and beast. Of savage beasts we had frequent evidence in the villages and by the way.

"Did you meet any lions this morning?" was the query addressed to us on our arrival at Chinsali.

No, we had met none, we were thankful to say.

"Because," continued our host, "three lions went up the path about half an hour before you came down."

The remark was made as casually as if it had been three cats walking along the top of the garden wall. To encounter lions in one's morning walk seemed to this lonely man a commonplace occurrence, to be quietly accepted as all in the day's work.

Of the fiercer savagery of man frightful evidences now appeared.

Chinsali is in the country of the Wemba, among whom in the old days punishment by mutilation was frequent. Sitting beside the study hut we found blind Shiwembia, a sight to move the deepest pity. He had been a man of consequence in the tribe, and was married to the chief's daughter. One of his children unfortunately died, and the witch doctor laid the blame on him. In consequence of this his wife and children were taken from him and his eyes put out. Not a hundred yards from where he sat, his brother-in-law, the present chief, stalked along through the forest with a bodyguard of some thirty men, and there was Shiwembia, a poor blind beggar whom none of his people dared to succour.

Mutilations of women were not infrequent. One case which was singularly shocking was that of a little old woman with both hands cut off, as well as her nose and upper lip. The poor creature, when we caught sight of her, was sweeping out the door of her hut, holding the broom be-



BLIND SHIWEMBIA



A VICTIM OF THE SAVAGE WEMBA





AT LIVINGSTONE'S GRAVE

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tween her wrists. Years ago her husband had been killed for some offence, and she mutilated in this dreadful way.

"And if it had not been for your coming," said a woman to the Doctor, "we should all have been like that."

Then one realised that worse than intertribal war, worse even than the dread slave raid, was the persistent, home-coming tyranny of the local chief. From him there was no escape. A strong savage eating up his own people, and wreaking on them every cruelty that lust and passion could devise.

Already among the cruel Wemba the foundations of a Christian community have been laid. On Sunday the mud church was filled with a congregation who watched, with silent curiosity, the breaking of bread and the passing of the sacramental cup among a little circle of disciples. More attentive listeners no speaker could have desired. For the most part, in addressing native audiences through an interpreter, one observed the attention of the hearers divided between speaker and interpreter; but at Chinsali, when the story of Christian's encounters with the lions was told, the eyes of the people were riveted wholly on the interpreter, a sure sign that the story was going home.

In that primitive church the Deputy had the privilege of baptising seventeen men. Among the number were Joseph and Potiphar, Ananias and Herod! Pilate's name also was on the list, but for some unexplained reason he did not put in an appearance. It was a most extraordinary baptismal list. Even the Doctor, in all his experience, had never encountered one so strange. Yet, why should it be accounted so strange? The white man, having made his pick of Biblical names, ridicules the native who follows his example. Joseph is a sensible name; Potiphar is absurd. Daniel is all right; Ezekiel is ridiculous. David has no pious flavour about it; Hezekiah is insufferable cant.

It is ignorantly supposed by many that the missionary directs his young converts to these Biblical names, and supervises their choice. In fact, he takes nothing to do with the matter, except in some missions to dissuade from their use, in which case, as among the Blantyre boys, there

springs up a crop of George Washingtons and William Gladstones. Failing such names of high respectability, others will be chosen of a very different flavour, as, for example, Coffee and Damson Jam.

If it be asked why any change of name is made, the answer is that the native, ignorant of registration, thinks nothing of changing his name, and, moreover, he is accustomed on important occasions, such as the birth of his first-born son, to have a new name conferred upon him. It is therefore consonant with his ideas that a new name should mark his entrance on the Christian life. The practice has weighty Scriptural support, and if there be errors in taste, these may safely be left to work their own cure.

The brief but memorable week-end at Chinsali was over, and early on Monday morning we took the road. The missionary accompanied us to the top of the forest glen, and put us on the southward path. Then quietly he turned back to his lonely post. To one at least of that company the memory of him abides as a rebuke and an inspiration. A more perfect picture of patient, unrewarded service it would be impossible to conceive. It is not with him as with the Boma man, who, in his youth, enjoys a few years of wild forest life in the reasonable hope of promotion and comparative wealth. For him there is no promotion. He has grown grey in the forest, and amid its solitudes he is—doomed, men would say, to finish his life's work. "Now, they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but he an incorruptible."

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE SIGN OF THE CHAMELEON.

THE chameleon is the most repulsively deliberate of creeping things. Its motion resembles nothing so much as a slow-moving, inexorable fate. No one who has watched it crawling towards its unsuspecting prey by fractions of an inch, each forward step a succession of almost imperceptible jerks, can ever forget the sight. In complete contrast is the motion of the swift-running lizard. Resembling the chameleon in shape, this bright little creature runs nimbly on the rocks, pausing every now and then to look up with all the pertness of a sparrow.

With these explanations the following African legend will be better appreciated. In the beginning of the world, runs the legend, God sent the chameleon with a message of life to man. Some say a message that he would never die; others, a message that he would die and rise again. The chameleon thought there was no hurry, and moved off at his own pace. Afterwards the swift-running lizard was sent with a message of death, that man would die utterly. The lizard outran the chameleon and delivered his message first. When the chameleon arrived, his message was laughed at.

It is a profoundly significant legend, and one wonders if it had its birth in some dim prevision of the tardiness of the Christian Church in bearing God's evangel to the heathen world. This thought kept recurring persistently as we travelled south from Chinsali through the neglected district of Mpika, among a people who have appealed impressively, but in vain, for the living word. The story



of that appeal is told in an official document of a most unusual kind:—

“Extract of the proceedings at a meeting of the chiefs of the Mpika Sub-district with His Honour the Administrator at Mpika on the first day of July, 1913.

“*Present*—All the chiefs and important headmen of the Sub-district, except Mpepo and those from the swamps.

“The Mpika Station official staff, A. Kinghorn, M.O., P. C. Cookson, A. C. Dickenson, and His Honour the Administrator (L. A. Wallace, Esq., C.M.G.).

“After the usual greetings H.H. the Administrator informed the chiefs and people that he had nothing particular to communicate to them, and invited them to mention any matters that they might wish to bring to his notice.

“In reply to this, *Luchembé* said, ‘We want some education. We want some teachers to come and teach us to read and write. Worship, prayer, and hymns may be good, but we want to learn to read and write.’

“*H.H. The Administrator* inquired if the White Fathers’ Mission at Chilonga did not provide them with such education as they asked for. *Luchembé* replied that they did not. Hymns and prayers were all that were taught in the villages.

“In response to further questions, *Luchembé* said, ‘The native teachers from Chilonga stop but a day or two in our villages, and when they go away they do not return for a month or so’. He added, ‘We know and respect the Chilonga Mission, but we envy our neighbours in the Serenjë and Chinsali districts. The White Fathers have been here many years, and we are still completely ignorant. The other Mission (Livingstonia) has been but a short time at Chinsali and Serenjë, and there are many natives in those districts that can now read and write. We recognise the value and assistance of an elementary education, and we too wish to enjoy them. We want the Livingstonia Mission asked to give us their schools.’

“*Masongo, Wadya, Kopa* and others that were asked their views, agreed with all that *Luchembé* had said, and

warmly supported his request. The Messengers, Mailmen, Police, and the natives of the Boma village (headman Kamati), as well as employees in the service of Europeans, also joined the appeal. There were no dissentients.

"*His Honour The Administrator*, in reply, said that he understood and sympathised with the appeal, and would do nothing to oppose or discourage it. At the same time it must be understood that there was no question of the Administration asking the Livingstonia Mission to establish schools in the district. This would be at variance with the policy, both past and present, adopted by the Administration towards the various denominations pursuing mission-work in the country. The request had been spontaneously made by the natives, and it could not be ignored, but the natives themselves should convey it direct (*e.g.*, by a deputation) to the Mission to which they wished to apply.

"*His Honour* added that the system of the Livingstonia Mission required the fulfilment of certain obligations by those whom it consented to teach, *e.g.*, the building of school-houses in the villages, the support of the teacher (until a member of the village should be qualified to teach), and the payment of small school fees; and he further warned them that, supposing the teachers of the Livingstonia, or of any other Mission whom they might invite, were to come in response to their appeal, there must be no kind of friction between the adherents or teachers of Chilonga Mission and those of the new.

"To this the natives replied that they had no wish for any friction, and would do their best to avoid it."

(Signed) E. H. CHOLMELEY, .

*Nat. Com. and Asst. Magistrate.*

This important document was officially communicated to the Mission by the Government, and deputations of natives, as suggested by the Administrator, visited both Chinsali and Chitambo to urge the occupation of the Mpika district. A full report of the whole affair was sent

home, where it found an ignoble grave in some pigeon-hole without ever having come to the ears of the Church to which it was addressed. The reason given for the inaction of the Home Committee was the impropriety of encroaching on the sphere of the White Fathers. The excuse came strangely from a Church in which a proposal to start a great Mission in Latin America was being influentially supported. Still more strange was it in this case, in view of an assurance given by the Administrator's secretary in a covering letter, that the White Fathers were present at the meeting of chiefs and said they had no objection to the proposal.

On our southward journey we visited Chilonga, which is situated fifteen miles south of the Mpika Boma. Only one Father was present, and with him we conversed with difficulty, as he had practically no English. "The—lawbor—men—want," was his idiom to express the fact that labour was scarce. His Mission worked westward, he said, towards Lake Bangweolo and the swamps, and attempted nothing towards the east and the Luangwa valley. That this little settlement of monks from Algiers should be accepted by a great Scottish Church as a substitute for a Presbyterian and educational Mission seemed amazing. Apart from the fact that it was Romanist, and not Protestant, ritualistic and not educational, it did not, in point of fact, occupy the district. And even if it did, it could surely never be regarded as satisfactory that natives in a British colony should be under the spiritual charge of men who could not speak the English language.

Mpika fills the wide gap of 200 miles separating Chinsali from Chitambo. It is the one missing link in the wide semicircle of hill stations that surround the Luangwa valley, the one nail in the great horseshoe that needs to be driven home. It is more populous than the Chitambo district, yet the Church which has passed over Mpika proposes to open a second station in Chitambo, crowding its own workers into a corner through nervous anxiety to give the White Fathers plenty of elbow room.

One could wish there were more evidence of a compre-

hensive policy governing the decisions of the Home Committee. A great missionary Institution has been reared in the hills near the north end of Lake Nyasa, the value of which must obviously depend on the support of a strong native church within easy reach. So remote from the Institution is the proposed new station, that Edinburgh could be reached from it in a considerably shorter time. Mpika is a fortnight's journey nearer the Institution, and if it be neglected the future may see a broad wedge of Romanism driven into the heart of Livingstonia.

The question of a governing policy has become more urgent by the expulsion of the Germans from East Africa. The south-west districts of that colony are nearer the Institution at Mt. Waller than are the southern stations of the Mission. The north half of the Winamwanga and the Wankondé are now accessible. At the head of the lake, within 100 miles of the Institution, is a populous and fertile valley, where the natives will tell you, with grateful remembrance of their deliverance from Mlozi, that their country belongs neither to the Germans nor to the British, but to Mr. Moir and Mr. Monteezee (Monteith). German missions, the Berlin and the Moravians, have broken ground in these districts, but it may be taken for certain that these will not be resumed. Apart from questions of Germany's financial ability to support them, and of Britain's willingness to tolerate them, German Missionary Societies have given indication that their future policy will be, "Never again under the British flag". In these circumstances the only wise and natural line of expansion for the Scots Mission is towards the north. It touches, too, the national honour to see to it that native races are not worse off, religiously, under British rule than they were under German. Here religion and patriotism make their joint appeal, and if in a great world crisis it be not worthily responded to, then ought the Scots Church, in simple honesty, to blot out from her escutcheon the emblem of the flying dove, swift messenger of peace, and pursue her sluggish march under the sign of the chameleon.



## CHAPTER XXI.

### CHITAMBO.

CHITAMBO is one of the historic names of Central Africa. Originally the name of a petty chief of the Walala, it rose into world-wide fame when the illustrious David Livingstone died at Chitambo's village, and his heart was buried there. Associating the name with the death-weariness of the great traveller, with pelting rain and steaming swamps, and the depression of gloomy forest depths, one was prepared to encounter climatic conditions of an exceptionally trying kind. The actual experience was a rare and glorious surprise. The so-called Old Chitambo of the maps does not now exist. The chief and his people migrated to the west, and no trace of their village remains. But fifty miles away, on a broad breezy upland, the industry of Mr. Moffat has created the new Chitambo, which will be the permanent memorial of David Livingstone. Reverence for the memory of the dead would have suggested that the memorial mission should be planted near the grave, but the excessive prevalence of the tsetse among the swamps made that impossible. The site chosen is on the very summit of the watershed, where the nights are cool and there is an exhilarating sense of space and air. From the roof of the Mission-house a wide view is obtained over a sparsely wooded country. Five miles away is Moir's Lake, most irresolute of waters, named after the most resolute of men. So nicely is it poised on the broad watershed that it oozes out at one end to the Zambesi and at the other end to the Congo.

The progress achieved in a few years at the Mission is astonishing. A more capable pioneer it would have been

impossible to find than Mr. Moffat, both by natural relationship as the nephew of Mrs. Livingstone and the grandson of Robert Moffat, as well as by lifelong experience of African life. The plan of the Mission-station is on bold and ample lines. The various buildings are grouped irregularly. The Mission-house faces the school and the teachers' huts; behind these are the store and the printing press; to the left the doctor's house and the new hospital. Broad roads lead off in every direction through fields of *milesi* and *amasaka*, while down by the stream is a carefully irrigated garden. The whole might well have stood for the fruit of a lifetime of labour, and it supplies a striking illustration of what one capable and vigorous man can do to make the wilderness blossom as the rose.

To us at least Chitambo appeared a veritable oasis in the desert, a home of rest for wayworn travellers. Our march had been long and weary, through a fly-infested and hungry land. Often did we think with longing of the brimming pots of milk in the villages around Mwenzo. Food for the carriers was scarce, and our own supplies ran short. *Milesi* porridge, with milk, is palatable enough, but when the meal is ground by a native woman at the door of her hut, and swept up off the clay floor, it cannot be over clean, and served with sugar, and—when sugar failed—with marmalade, was anything but appetising. After these experiences came Chitambo, where we rested under a hospitable roof and enjoyed again the luxury of fresh milk. Only those who have paid the price can realise the pleasure of satisfying Nature's simple wants. Doubtless the forty years in the wilderness gave Israel a rare appetite for the land flowing with milk and honey. Such was Chitambo to us.

Here let me pay my humble tribute to the lady of the Mission-house, not of Chitambo alone, but of many another station. King Lemuel's mother must have had a vision of her when she chanted that immortal eulogy to her son: "Her price is above rubies, the law of kindness is in her tongue." With a heart made very tender by loneliness, and often by separation from her children, she has a rare welcome for the stranger. At times she falls a victim to

some globe-trotter who sits at her table, devouring her substance, and afterwards writes sneeringly of Missions. She may even find herself pilloried by name for her manner of conducting her household. It is understood, of course, that being only a missionary, she has no refinement of feeling, and is not to be treated according to the laws of good breeding. Her guest overnight has even been known to purloin a blanket. Yet she takes it all with inexhaustible philosophy and good humour. For she, too, has a mission. Her household management is an essential element in the elevation of the natives. The boys and girls trained under her hand begin to know the meaning of a Christian home. With them she is infinitely sympathetic and tolerant. Not that she is blind to their faults, but she sees deep enough to comprehend and excuse them. Her house-girls are not stupid, she explains; they are just bewildered; they are not lazy, but simply suffering from brain fag.

Seeing your smile she proceeds to make her points good. "I take a raw girl into the house, and she has no names even for the simplest things. She must learn to distinguish soup-plates, meat-plates, pudding-plates, tea-plates and saucers. Also varieties of knives and spoons. In her vocabulary the little plates are the children of the big plates, and the bowls are the children of the basins. The whole house is a factory of strange machinery, and the household arrangements a mysterious ceremonial. To-day I reprove her for leaving out the bread till it is hard, and yesterday I reproved her for leaving out the biscuits till they were soft. She looks the picture of stupidity, but it is bewilderment, sheer bewilderment, and it leads to brain fag. Every day her work demands a sustained mental effort from a brain that has never been accustomed to effort. Even with the gentlest treatment she is fagged out in three months, and I send her home to her village for a rest. By and by she will come back and make a fresh and more hopeful start."

As one listened one saw the reasonableness of it all, saw also the *unreason* of the colonial housewife who declaims against the incurable laziness of her Kafir servant. "Just

when I had begun to get him into my way, he said he was tired and went home to his kraal."

The home at Chitambo had the crowning charm of boy life. Robert Laws and John Moffat, gallant little fellows of illustrious name, one might travel far to find another pair of brothers to match them. Royal times we had together. We broke in a yoke of wayward calves till we could steer our chariot of a log triumphantly, if erratically, round the station. We sat under the shadow of the house, deep in the mysteries of *chisolo*, the great African game which puzzles every traveller as he watches it played in the villages. It has even been declared to be incomprehensible by any but an African mind, but John and Robert were experts, as they had a right to be, for nothing African is hidden from them. These were sunny days, and I crave the forgiveness of my little chums, if I tell a story at their expense. Their grandfather, the most venerable citizen of Cape Town, had come to see them. The boys regarded him with reverent awe, mingled with boyish curiosity.

"Are you old, Grandpa?" asked John.

"Yes, I am old," was the reply.

"Are you very old?"

"Yes, I am very old."

"Were you in the ark, Grandpa?" queried Robert.

"Oh, no, I was not in the ark."

"Then, *how were you not drowned?*"

Such is the perspective of the ages as seen through the happy eyes of childhood.

Our visit to Chitambo was made the occasion for a series of special services. The school being inadequate to contain the people, a stockade of elephant grass was built, in which was a low platform with an awning of thatch. Here the people met daily. At the close of one of the meetings a fine young chief, with a frank, engaging face, came forward and was introduced. His entrance into the Palace Beautiful had not been without difficulty. He was a polygamist with two wives, to the second of whom he was deeply attached. The demand of the Church was that she should be put away, and the other retained as his only lawful wife.



The distracted husband was literally in a strait betwixt two. At last he complied with the Christian law and was admitted to the membership of the Church. Some years after, on the death of his wife, he went to the woman he loved and asked her to marry him. She consented to return, but refused to be remarried, saying, "I have been your wife all the time".

"And I thought all the more of her for saying it," remarked Mrs. Moffat, with a fine defiance of ecclesiastical law.

On Sunday the congregation was counted as they entered the enclosure, and found to number sixteen hundred and seventy-two. Twenty-two men, ten women, and six children were baptised, while seventy were admitted as catechumens. All this in the remote and dark region where Livingstone died, and where, a few years ago, the ranks of heathenism were unbroken. One had seen larger crowds elsewhere and more advanced communities, but nothing more thrilling to the imagination, nothing more big with promise for the future.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### AT LIVINGSTONE'S GRAVE.

ON Monday morning I set out from Chitambo with a dozen carriers to visit the monument which marks the spot where Livingstone's heart is buried. Irak, one of the teachers, was my guide and interpreter. Moffat insisted on our taking a rifle and a pocketful of cartridges, in case of encountering a lion by the way.

"My experience is," he said, calmly explaining how the thing was done, "that if you stand your ground the lion will stop about five paces off before it springs. Then is your chance."

This was very well for a dead shot, who, the previous week had brought down two hartebeests with successive bullets, reloaded and knocked over a third as the herd were galloping away. To him a lion at five paces was as good as dead, but I could feel no such confidence. However, as he was imperative, I took the rifle and pocketed the cartridges. Only on our safe return did he explain the reason of his anxiety. A gang of boys, whom he had sent shortly before to clear the bush round the monument, had been scared away by lions, and one of them, who unluckily met a lion in the path, left only a shred of calico to tell the tale.

The first day the going was easy, as the path went winding steadily down hill from the watershed towards the swampy basin in which Lake Bangweolo lies. At one point, however, an elephant had struck the path in the rainy season when the ground was soft, and walked along it for several miles. His ponderous feet had left cavities the size of a large pot, and about six inches deep. Then one

understood a remark of Livingstone's in his last journal about the fatigue and difficulty of following a path which had been traversed by an elephant.

Our journey prolonged itself for nearly three hours after sunset, but fortunately there was a moon. As the tsetse were particularly bad here I had my head enveloped in a veil, but in the moonlight I dispensed with it, having just read that the tsetse never bite after dark. The result was a most troublesome bite in the neck as a warning against credulity. At length we reached the Mulembo River, which we crossed with difficulty on a rustic bridge suspended among the branches of the overhanging trees. A steep climb up the opposite bank brought us to the village of Katowawula, where we were fain to lie down together and sleep on the floor of the little school without waiting to form camp.

Early next morning I stepped out of the school. The air was fresh and clear. The village stood high and commanded a wide view of the forest. Suddenly a villager started to thunder on a drum at my side.

"What is this for?" I asked Irak.

"They come to pray," was his answer, spoken with beautiful simplicity.

In a few minutes the people had gathered round the school door. Irak led the service, and interpreted like a very Hermes. Nothing could have been finer than his choice of an opening hymn, "Glory be to God the Father," sung to the stately tune of Regent Square. As the music rose on the still air, and we looked out over leagues of forest gilded by the morning sun, it was a moment of profound emotion.

Taking the road again we soon reached lower ground, and now began a weary wrestle through the swamps where the long grass, as stiff as canes, met overhead and often completely blocked our way. One could only faintly imagine what it must have been like when Livingstone passed at the end of the rainy season with the swamps flooded and "the pitiless pelting showers wetting everything". The task he had set himself was to travel round

the south end of Bangweolo, and, having reached the point at which the Luapula flows out of the lake, follow its course and determine whether it led to the Congo or the Nile. A hopeless task it would have proved, even had his strength not failed, for so deep and labyrinthine are the swamps around the lake that the outlet of the river has never yet been determined with precision.

In the early afternoon we reached Chitono's, the village nearest the monument, though several miles away. The chief remembers having seen Livingstone, as also does the old blacksmith, who sat on the ground grimly puffing his goatskin bellows while the boys played *chisolo* beside his forge. But they refused to be drawn. They were too young, they protested, to remember anything. Wily old Africans, it was simply their way of saying, why should they give themselves away to a mere stranger? At other times, and among friends, they can tell the story graphically enough.

We pushed on through the forest, crossed two more swamps and then suddenly, as we emerged from the second, came face to face with the monument. To the natives the spot is known as Chipundu, and no fitter name could be given, for the tree under which Livingstone's heart is buried, commonly called an *mvula* tree, is in the language of Ilala, a *chipundu*.

The monument stands in the centre of a square clearing in the forest. The four sides of the clearing, each about 100 yards in length, are marked off with an edging of brick. The square is hoed clean, and the firm grey soil has the general appearance of fine gravel. Round the monument a few dark cypress trees have been planted. The line of the square is broken on the middle of the east side, where a broad hoed road runs straight back into the forest for 200 yards. It leads to a little cottage, built as a rest-house for any visitor to the grave. Beside the rest-house are a few native huts for the accommodation of carriers, but they were half in ruins.

Barely had we time to take in all this, however, for the moment we stepped into the square, with head uncovered,



we were furiously set upon by swarms of tsetse. We had previously passed through several fly areas, but for rush and fury had encountered nothing like the flies at the monument. In vain we thrashed about us with leafy branches. They swarmed on us like bees, and we were compelled to beat a hasty retreat to the rest-house and slam the door. One might write a volume on the plague and peril of the tsetse. Beyond comparison it is man's deadliest enemy in Central Africa, more hurtful and horrible by far than all the varied tribes of beasts of prey. The tsetse has the persistence of the midge, the gluttony of the blue-bottle, the lightning dart of the cleg, the diabolical ingenuity of the mosquito, with a catalogue of devilish qualities all its own. And now, as the convicted carrier of sleeping sickness, it has been branded with its last title of horror.

By sunset the last of the carriers came in switching vigorously with branches, and all took refuge in the rest-house. It may have been the fatigue of the journey, or perhaps the sad associations of the place, but I thought I had never seen the twilight fall so mournfully. Perhaps it was in such a twilight that Livingstone wrote in his diary near the end, "Nothing earthly shall make me give up my work in despair". One thought of the awful crawl of the last week which brought his mighty wanderings to a close. "April 22nd—2½ hours, 23rd—1½ hours, 24th—1 hour, 25th—1 hour, 26th—2½ hours." A total of 8½ hours, less than we had done that day! Each of these swampy hollows a day's journey!

After dark the young moon silvered the tree-tops and gleamed on the monument at the far end of the glade. It was interesting to find from the *Last Journals* that the same crescent moon was looking down on the world the night he died. As the tsetse had by this time retired, I proposed to the carrier boys a moonlight visit to the grave. It was plain the suggestion had no attraction for them. Besides being wholly unromantic, they were tired with the journey and nervous about lions. Gallant little Irak, however, took his spear, my faithful Jumari lit the lamp which

he had now carried for 800 miles, and with one of the carriers following us we strolled down the glade.

If thou wouldst view fair Melrose aright  
Go visit it by the pale moonlight.

Certainly the words may be applied with equal truth to Chipundu. The pyramid gleaming like white marble above the dark surrounding cypresses, the still solemnity of the encircling forest, the crescent moon sailing overhead, made an utterly unique and unforgettable picture.

It was a perfect night, when one would fain have strolled for miles through the dim forest, but the pleasure of a moonlight walk would have been bought at too terrible a risk. In Central Africa night always brings the lurking dread of the beast of prey. So we returned to the rest-house, where the boys were already stretched on the floor in sleep.

Opening the window I leaned out for a while, drinking in the cool night air and letting the stillness and solitude wrap me round. Just on such a night as this he died. These half-ruined huts, dimly seen in the moonlight, might be the very huts built by his men. With but little imagination one could repeople them. Among the dim shadows of the trees a figure moves about, touching one and another into wakefulness as they lie round the embers of the watchfires. They sit up and talk in hurried whispers, they gather about the hut door, fearfully they stoop down and peer in. Alas, it is true. Their great leader is dead. At that moment a light breeze touches the tree-tops like the passing flutter of an angel's wing. It sends a far-heard whisper through the stillness of the forest, and one awakens as from a dream. Did ever a human soul pass upward to God out of so vast and terrible a solitude?

Next morning we were astir at dawn, and, as the tsetse give little trouble till towards the heat of the day, we spent a delightful half hour at the monument. Irak, with his spear beside him, conducted the service and acted as interpreter. He gave out the hymn—

Let us with a gladsome mind  
Praise the Lord for He is kind.

which we sang in Chiwisa to the old familiar tune. I loved that boy for his choice of hymns. Then he prayed. After that I told as simply as I could the story of Livingstone's death and of his faithful followers, also of his country's love of him and of Africa for his sake. One could not but feel a thrill in saying, "His heart lies buried here". The little group of carriers sat in front, very quiet and motionless. How much of the story they were taking in it would be impossible to say, but among them were two bright-eyed lads, Changwi and Chikumbé, who had followed their fathers on this trip just for the fun of the road, and had come in, the night before, limping badly, but still game and smiling. Be sure when they got home they would have something to tell.

A few moments more and the carriers had shouldered their loads and were striding off, for we had a long day before us. In half a dozen paces the long grass of the swamp shut out the monument from our sight, but left it in one mind at least a most holy and imperishable memory.

In the rest-house we had left a book in which the rare visitor to the grave might inscribe his name. A sheet of paper, which had previously done duty for a visitor's book, and which contained some highly interesting names, had unfortunately been destroyed. Afterwards we learnt with the utmost pleasure that the first names to be inscribed in the book were the names of Livingstone's own grandchildren. Dr. Wilson and his sister, on reaching Chitambo, to which they had been appointed, paid a visit to the grave, and at the same time made a tour of the neighbouring villages to introduce themselves to the people among whom they expected to find their life's work.

A notable occurrence surely! Men die in the fond hope that their bodies will be laid with kindred dust, and that some who love them will stand beside their grave and bring them to remembrance. No such hope could have cheered the last hours of Livingstone. Sundered from his wife's grave by half a continent, and from his family by half the circle of the globe, if he thought at all about it, he must have concluded that his grave in the depth of the

forest would be for ever unknown to his friends, and be trodden on by the careless foot of wild beast and savage. Yet the spot has become one of earth's sacred places, and after nearly half a century his family come to visit and tend it with pious care.

Dr. Livingstone's grandson begins his career as a missionary physician at the spot where his grandfather laid his work down. Seldom does an event occur that so completely satisfies the mind by its dramatic fitness. Thus the good cause advances in spite of death, or rather through it. For "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit".



## CHAPTER XXIII.

### CHIPANDWÉ'S DAY.

WHEN I first caught sight of Chipandwé, she was dancing along the forest path in front of me like a little brown fairy, waving her hands merrily above her head in the morning sun. We were returning from Livingstone's grave, and had slept the previous night at Katowawula. In the morning we started early, for we had thirty miles to go to the Mission-house at Chitambo, and these thirty miles were to be Chipandwé's Marathon.

The people accompanied us down to the river which flows within steep banks below their village, and helped us over the rustic bridge. The girls took the carriers' loads and tripped nimbly across. They seemed to regard the bridge as a thoroughly reliable and satisfactory structure, though to us it appeared even crazier than when we crept across it in the moonlight on the outward journey. After cheery good-byes the villagers turned back, and our little line of carriers went on.

It was then that I noticed Chipandwé. On my asking Irak who she was, he explained that her uncle was going with her and her brother on a visit to a village near Chitambo, and had taken advantage of our company for safety in passing through the forest. It was no uncommon thing to pick up travellers in this way, for a solitary journey is always somewhat risky.

Chipandwé, or Chip for short, could not have been more than six years old. Her only dress was a loincloth with a string of blue and white beads round her neck. But she was a remarkably smart and dainty-stepping little thing,

and as frisky as a kitten. She kept well to the front of the line of carriers, and when we came to a *dambo*, where the grass might be eight or ten feet high, it was charming to watch her boring through like a wee mouse, with her two tiny brown hands held high in front of her face and all the fingers outspread.

At first she was very shy of me, having rarely and perhaps never seen a white face before, but gradually she grew less timid, and we began to make friends. It happened that the back tyre of my cycle had burst at Chitono's the day before, and I had to foot it all the way. Chip was going splendidly, but about the middle of the forenoon I thought she must be getting tired and would relish a ride on the cycle. At first she was frightened, and clung desperately to my shoulder, but very soon she saw she had struck a good thing, and that a cycle is a better friend on a long journey than an old uncle. From that time she stuck to the cycle the whole day, and was rewarded with a short ride every few miles.

About noon we rested for an hour and then pushed on through the heat of the day. Chip kept up so pluckily that I began to feel quite proud of my little chum, as she pattered on in front with her head well back and her brown feet twinkling on the path. Her mother had dressed her hair in the morning with home-made castor oil, and now, in the great heat, it ran glistening down her neck. I plucked a bright-red starry flower with two spear-shaped leaves and stuck it in her hair. It nestled in the black, wiry curls like a tiny crown and wings, and was the one touch needed to make her a perfect miniature of Wingèd Victory, as a Greek might have said.

By this time we had drawn ahead of the carriers, and only the cycle-boy and the boy with the rifle were with us. The uncle kept up for a while, but he also dropped behind. Chip never faltered nor looked back. We had hoped to reach Chitambo by sunset, but now the sun hung low and our shadows lengthened in front of us.

About sunset the forest broke away, and we came out on a wide moor where the cool air was welcome to me, but

chilly for my companions. In the middle of the moor was a village, and we went through it in single file, looking neither to right nor left. The villagers trotted behind and on either side of us, but Chip never turned her head nor paid the least regard. I laughed to see her. It was so absurdly like the pictures one remembered of some world champion finishing the last lap. Had a crowd of London journalists been there recording she could not have stepped out more gallantly.

Suddenly a voice at my elbow said, "Good evening, Sair".

"Good evening," I said, without stopping. "Can you speak English?"

"A leetle, Sair."

"How far to Chitambo," I asked.

"Seex mile," he replied.

"Tut," I snorted scornfully, and marched on. A native has little idea of distance by our measurement. I have heard a man say sixty miles when it was only two. But, alas, in this case the report was only too accurate, six long, weary miles, if not more, ere we reached our journey's end.

The sun set as we left the village, and we entered the forest again. Fortunately there was a good moon, and we plodded on through a succession of forest and *dambo*, always hoping the next stretch would be the last. Up and up the rolling slope we went, feeling that Africa's backbone was terribly broad. What had been easy going on the outward journey was a different proposition going home. The forest glades looked ghostly in the moonlight, and one wondered uneasily how far off the nearest leopard or lion might chance to be.

Just as I felt sure we must be almost home, the two boys stop and sign that they can go no farther without a rest and a smoke. Of course, they have no glimmer of an idea of record breaking. It is most annoying for my little Marathon runner, but what can we do? I light a bunch of grass and sit down to wait till the smoke is over.

Chip creeps in between my knees for warmth, like the dearest wee pet that ever was, and while the boys puff their common pipe, we share a drink out of the water-bottle. Then on again.

Now I take Chip's hand, and when she feels the warmth of mine, she clasps it with both of hers and presses it against her cold breast. One could not but be touched by her winning ways and perfect trust. She gets an occasional ride on the cycle, but not too long, because the night air has grown so chilly. Will the forest never end? Again and again, as the trees broke away, we said, "this must be the Chitambo clearing," only to find it was another *dambo* to be crossed. A few shadows appear in front and prove to be natives, who go trooping silently past. Welcome sight! We hail them with, "*Chitambo pafupi?*" (Is Chitambo near?)

"*Eh, papipi*" (Yes, near), was the reply. A cheering assurance, though it proved a somewhat long *papipi*.

At last the edge of the wished-for clearing is reached. We stumble down through a rough ploughed field with furrows as hard as iron, cross the stream, climb the opposite slope between the fields of millet, and reach the door of the Mission-house. Chip had done the thirty miles in three minutes under twelve hours, all stops included, and I rather think her record will stand—for girls of six. The first of the carriers came in an hour later.

Next day she received her prize of a new dress, consisting of a yard of calico. Her uncle was standing by, wondering why a child should be taken notice of.

"Tell him," I said to Irak, "that she beat all the carriers yesterday."

He grunted something in reply.

"What does he say?" I asked.

"He says, 'she had no load to carry'." The old growler!

"Tell him," I said, "to be sure and send her to school and teach her to read, for if once she begins to run



the Christian race she will never stop till she wins the crown."

Dear wee Chipandwé in your far-off African forest, as sweet and lovable as ever child could be, may the path be easy for your little feet, and, ere they grow too weary, may it lead you home.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE LADS OF THE *ULENDO*.

IT all came back to mind the night we slept at Katowawula. Our march of the previous day had been long and arduous as we struggled up out of the swamps around Livingstone's grave. We reached the village late and tired, and in mercy to the weary men it was agreed that we should all sleep in the school together. Soon a big fire was blazing in the middle of the mud floor. The smoke curled slowly up to the roof and found its way out through the thatch. It hung thick overhead, but near the floor where we sat the air was comparatively clear.

My camp-bed was spread on the low, mud platform at the end of the room, and lying there one could survey the whole scene. Our appearance, it must be confessed, bore a somewhat close resemblance to a tinkers' camp. Round the fire were the ragged and half-naked carriers, eleven men and two boys. Their wallets of food were flung carelessly down, and pots were boiling on the fire. Black earthen pitchers of water, brought by the village women, stood about the floor, and in a corner some spears and staves leaned against the wall. Yet, rude and savage as they seemed, not one of these men had looked in my direction while I was eating supper, nor turned his head as I undressed. Now that I had lain down they moved about noiselessly, and their voices never rose above a murmur.

Owing perhaps to the fatigue of the day's march, I found myself unable to sleep, and lay in comfortable drowsiness watching the men. One by one they covered

their heads and lay down by the fire, and their breathing grew deep and sweet. By all the rules of fiction they should have snored like so many foghorns, inasmuch as they were only niggers, and niggers are bound by natural necessity to do everything that is objectionable. But in reality their sleep was as soft as an infant's. Now and then somebody would stir and push a half-burnt log into the fire. One sat up and lit his pipe, a clumsy wooden implement with stem as thick as a brush handle. Its fragrance appeared to reach the sleepers, for from among their prostrate forms several hands were silently lifted and the pipe went round. Each man, as their custom is, took half a dozen stiff pulls and then handed it to his neighbour. It was good to be awake and watch so rare and novel a scene.

For the most part I lay with half-closed eyes while dreamy pictures of the road went trooping by. What glorious times we had had with the boys by lake and river, through forest and *dambo*, over the mountains and down the great plateau! What scenes of wild romantic beauty, what comradeship upon the road! What friendly greetings in the villages, with handclapping and *ululooing*, with salutations and good-byes in half a dozen dialects! What troops of excited boys and laughing girls, to whom the white stranger was a world's wonder! Mere surface glimpses of native life at its brightest, not penetrating to the dark underworld, but revealing so much that was human and lovable and big with possibility.

Possibility that in many cases has become reality. What splendid fellows one had met—men of sound sense and Christian character—men it was a pleasure to have known. One thought of Sam Kauti and Philemon, whose consistent lives, upon his own confession, had convinced a white trader of the truth and power of the Gospel. One thought of Daniel Gondwé, a manly presence, and of dreamy-eyed Hezekiah of Ekwendeni, inseparable friends these two, linking their hands together as they walk, like a pair of young lovers. Then of Isaiah, the sweet singer of Karonga, among his flower-decked children, of faithful John

Abanda, now gone to his rest ; of shrewd Peter Sinkala, of David also, tall and slim and very gentle, with his little weakness for immaculate dress. One thought, too, of Jonathan reading his Greek Testament, of Edward with his noble brow and deep dark eyes, and of others, down to little Irak lying there among the carriers by the fire, far from his home in Kasungu, a foreign missionary and an exile, for the Gospel's sake, as truly as St. Paul.

These all are the elect of their people, the destined leaders of the new age, the visible proofs of what the African, by Christian education, may become. But, besides these, I had no less kindly remembrance of others, the ordinary carriers and companions of the way. Some were Christian and some heathen, but all were willing and cheery, friendly to me and to one another. Callous, indeed, should I be if I did not think of them with gratitude. My good Jumari lies there by the fire, sleeping the sleep of the just, and well he may. Eight hundred miles he has followed me, every step of the way on foot, carrying the lamp which I have never once seen him entrust to any of the men. When we part to-morrow he will have 600 miles to trudge by mountain and forest to his home beside the lake. I shall feel that I have lost a friend, for though we could converse but little, what he lacked in English he made up in smiles. I think of the Tonga boys, of big, good-humoured Farudi, of ragged Hanok, who set the pace, of Simon and Johanné, the Apostles of the box. Then comes to mind Alick, the cycle-boy, a straight and strapping figure. How pleasant is the memory of him as he came like a gentleman to say good-bye at Mwenzo. Standing on the veranda and watching him as he strode off, I was saying to myself, "What a fine fellow you are, and I shall never see you again". Suddenly at the edge of the forest he wheels round, flings up his hand with a hearty *Pawemé*, and is gone. I think of Jonah, the Doctor's incomparable cook, digging his oven in the ground with his spear, and bringing out of it the most delicious bread ; Jonah, the universal handy-man, who can produce from somewhere everything you want,



even to the ball-bearings of a cycle. I mount in imagination and cycle once again down the line of carriers with Kalulu, best beloved and ugliest of them all, sprinting after his *Bwana* and chaffing every carrier as we pass. Broad, good-humoured Pyoka-pyoka smiles up at us. A gentle soul is he, though his teeth have been filed to a sharp point to give fierceness to his look. He shakes his head at the idea of going to Scotland. The people there would probably eat him, he says. Pawky old Kayira hails us with a twinkle in his eye and a joke he has no English to express. Beside him Coffee clumps along in his heavy football boots. Last of all Nkufwela, the Capitao, silent and resourceful, brings up the rear, and comes padding softly into camp on sandals of raw hide.

All of them were the best of comrades, and it was the rarest occurrence to hear a voice raised in anger. By some mysterious process they arranged themselves in little groups, each of which ate out of a common pot. At the division of the *porso* the leaders of the groups would come, and in answer to the question, "How many eat out of your pot?" would carry away the appropriate number of portions. One has seen a whole eland or hartebeeste, as big as an ox, handed over and divided among the men without dispute.

Only one quarrel occurred in the whole journey, and it was but a passing breeze. It was the morning we left Kafwimbé's, and the subject of it was Coffee's Bible. A carrier found the book laid on the top of his basket. Never having seen it there before, he put it on the ground, for no carrier, be his load light or heavy, will tolerate the slightest addition to it if he can prevent it. The book apparently, by some strange arrangement, had been at the bottom of the basket before, but on the morning in question, Coffee perhaps having tarried long at his devotions, it was laid on the top. Coffee insisted, the carrier was obdurate. He raised his basket on to his head, whereupon Coffee threw in the Bible. Down came the basket, and out the offending volume went flying as far as an angry man could pitch it. Coffee sprang at him, but Kalulu slipped in between, and the storm blew over as quickly as it had risen. At the end

of the day the carrier came to the Doctor with his apology. He did not know it was a Bible, else he would not have handled it as he did. Poor fellow, there was doubtless more of superstitious dread prompting his apology than of true contrition. But such was the only case of friction in all these weeks, when men of different tribes were daily mingling with one another on the road and passing through scores of strange villages.

And these same boys go down to the mines and become so much native labour. They mix in the Babel of the compound, their history and character are unknown, their individuality is lost. All that is taken account of is so much black skin sheathing so much valuable muscle. Some would even deny the very existence of their manhood, and speak of them as brutes. Yet, how intensely human they are, and how lovable, both for their manly virtues and not less for their childish simplicity.

The night is wearing on. One of the men by the fire rises up, and, stepping softly over the prostrate bodies of his companions, takes a drink of water. I stretch my hand towards him, saying, *Minzi*. He lifts a black earthen pot of water and brings it to my bedside. I take a long, grateful drink, and in a few minutes fall fast asleep.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE LAST CAMP.

IT is 200 miles and odds from Chitambo to the railway at Broken Hill, and the traveller to the station must allow himself a fortnight to catch the train. At Chitambo Jumari had reached the limit of his wanderings, the carriers from the north had turned back and substitutes had to be found. In the morning they lined up in front of the Mission-house, under the charge of a native teacher who had recruited them.

"Can any of these men cook?" was the first anxious question.

A lad stepped forward. "What does he say?" asked the Deputy.

"He says 'I can try'."

"Very well, tell him the situation is his."

Only one sample of Chisulu's cooking abides in memory. The lady of the Mission-house, with anxious forethought, had provided a savoury pot of Irish stew. Next day Chisulu came with a look of dismay, the pot in one hand and the lid in the other. A glance showed the pot swarming with tiny ants, inextricably mixed with the stew. There was only one remedy for it.

"Boil them," said the Deputy, making a significant gesture towards the fire, whereupon Chisulu returned to his cooking, pleased to have found a man with sense enough to relish ants.

About seventy miles out we joined MacAlpine of Bandawé who had crossed the Luangwa, and had been occupied with Moffat and the Doctor in prospecting for a new Mission-station among the Walala. Some months before at Bandawé

we had planned to go down through Rhodesia together on our way home and visit the boys on the mines.

It was my friend's last home-coming after years of fruitful service, and his heart was sore at every step that took him farther from his beloved lake. He was nursing poignant memories of bitter-sweet farewells. On his departure the people followed him for miles. Most of them were his own spiritual children, whom he had loved and taught, baptised and married, rebuked, counselled and comforted. They crowded round his *machila*, invoking blessings upon him and uttering prayers for his safe home-coming. When at length they had all turned back, a solitary figure stepped out of the bush. It was Sam Kauti, who had resolved that his should be the last hand-clasp and word of farewell.

"My heart is broken," he said, and the two men, black and white, mingled their tears even as did David and Jonathan of old.

MacAlpine had brought with him Brapo, his cook, to whom Chisulu was now attached as kitchen-boy. Nobody ever was like Brapo if MacAlpine was to be credited. He would begin cunningly by calling attention to his ugliness, but only as a foil to his more excellent qualities of head and heart, as if to say, "Behold, how rare a jewel in how rough a setting". As Brapo had been in his service for twenty years it was not easy to gainsay this testimony, and Brapo was in truth a jewel. The only retort that one could make was to suggest that Brapo was not so ugly as he was made out to be.

"Do you think so?" said my friend, dubiously, not sure whether to be pleased or disappointed, for he evidently thought Brapo's ugliness, like every other quality about him, incomparable.

From Chitambo the great plateau bends westwards and crosses the railway at Kashitu. Our route being towards the south-west, led us gradually to the Zambesian side of the watershed, and from time to time we crossed lovely mountain streams gushing down to swell that king of rivers. Some of them, like the Mulungushi, echoed the music of their waters in their names. Ever and anon we met in the



path boys returning from the mines and carriers who had been to Broken Hill for loads. The returning mine-boy was easily distinguishable from the fact that he was carrying off to his forest home the rich spoils of civilisation—a hat perhaps, or a pair of yellow boots, sometimes even a bicycle, but most frequently a gaily-painted tin box in which his treasures were stored.

Fond memory lingers over some of the scenes of the way. MacAlpine admonishing the carriers made an unforgettable picture. Some of the new boys, thinking they would make their own pace, dawdled on the road, lit a fire, and cooked a second breakfast in the middle of the forenoon. They reached the mid-day resting place at 2 P.M., and of course delayed the whole *ulendo*. Brapo was ordered to call the boys, and they obediently lined up, elbowing each other uneasily. MacAlpine, as president of the court, sat on the top of the food-box, his face shaded by the broad brim of a sun helmet, his eyes hidden behind dark preserves, a most mysterious and awe-inspiring figure to a native eye. The Deputy, as assessor, was perched on a tin trunk. The proceedings opened with a torrent of the most eloquent Chitonga, in which the sins of the offenders were exposed in all their enormity. The culprits pled guilty by their silence, and were dismissed with an admonition. After that they gave no further trouble on the road.

The scene had its element of absurdity if one chose to regard it so. Here in the heart of the forest, miles from everywhere, were two white men, and arrayed over against them thirty or forty blacks, powerful and numerous enough to have made a meal of them. Yet they are rebuked as fearlessly, and submit to rebuke as meekly, as well-trained schoolboys. Because these two unarmed men sitting there have invisible forces on their side—the prestige of the white man and the whole power of the Empire.

Another scene comes to mind of Kambalani, the cycle-boy, emerging from a *dambo*, all unconscious of disaster, with the cycle on his shoulder and the broken chain wound round his neck. He was distinguished from the rest of the company by the fact that he owned a vest, and now he

looked as visibly self-satisfied as an alderman newly adorned with his chain of office. His glory, however, was short-lived, for that very night in camp he rolled in his sleep into the embers of the fire and woke to find that his vest had smouldered off his back.

Yet another scene. We are entering a *dambo* at dusk when Kambalani, who is in front, whispers eagerly, "*njiri*" (bush pig). MacAlpine seizes his rifle and creeps towards two dark objects moving in the grass. The supposed pigs disappear behind an ant-hill, and by the time Mack gets there they are gone. On his return the two boys, who meantime have been whispering excitedly, inform him that they think the brutes were lions. And lions sure enough they proved to be when their spoor was examined. Never shall I forget the eager, crouching figure of MacAlpine hurrying to get a pot shot at these two lions, with visions of roast pork before his eyes. Had he fired and wounded them, who knows which of us would have been left to tell the tale. That night in our forest camp, when all had been made secure with an unusually high and strong stockade, Kambalani led our evening prayer and gave simple thanks for safe keeping through the day. We responded with heartfelt Amens and laid us down to sleep.

Most sacred of all is the last camp. Memorable for Brapo's prayer, who, mentioning the Deputy by name, asked that he might be brought safe home to his own country, and given strength "to tell his people of the needs of this dark land". Months after, the Deputy was called to address the most important missionary meeting in Scotland. At the door of the Assembly Hall who should he meet but MacAlpine.

"You are speaking to-night?"

"Yes, and I wish it were well over."

"It is all right. You remember Brapo's prayer." And not once but often has that simple prayer been a spring of strength.

Memorable also was that last camp for the singing. There were hymn-books among us in five dialects, and all of them contained the grand old hymn—

Let us with a gladsome mind  
Praise the Lord for He is kind.

We made it our concluding psalm of thanksgiving for all the mercies of the way. Five times over each verse was sung, each time in a different dialect, while the whole company woke the forest echoes with a united chorus. More than a score of times did that chorus ring out, and we all seemed to have unwearied pleasure in singing it. The words remain indelibly imprinted on the mind. Ever since then, when the tune is sung at home, my heart flies to the far forest. I join the invisible choir of my black brothers, and sing softly to myself, as we sang in the last camp, the uncouth yet melodious words—

Wezi wake wakwanja  
Ukajanga muyaya.

And so will I take leave to sing it as long as the memory of that sacred night endures.

In a few hours more we were aboard the train, and the boys had turned back home. Brapo stood watching till the train took us from his sight, then he set out on his long journey to the lake. He had been offered wages if he would return by another route in the service of a white man, but he refused.

"No," said he. "I shall go back by the way we came, and I shall sleep at all the camps where my dear master slept."

With that the affectionate and faithful fellow set his face to the forest, and made his homeward journey a pilgrimage of fond and sacred memories.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### IN THE FAR COUNTRY.

WE travelled down from Broken Hill to Livingstone in the van of a goods' train, nothing else being available that day. The journey occupied twenty-four hours, and proved one of the roughest and most exhausting experiences we had had. On stepping out of the train at Livingstone station we had the unexpected pleasure of seeing General Botha. He had been on a visit to the Victoria Falls, and was now going north to the hinterland of the Belgian Congo. Surprise was being expressed at this most unusual extension of a pleasure trip, but in the light of subsequent events—it was now within a fortnight of the outbreak of the war—one suspects there was more on hand than mere sightseeing.

Livingstone is a town of handsome bungalows and fine hotels. Being the governing centre of Northern Rhodesia, its activities are governmental rather than commercial and industrial. The population consists of a few hundred whites, with a large colony of natives. Educated boys from Blantyre and Livingstonia find their way thither, and are employed as interpreters, clerks, and typists. Our purpose was to visit these boys and bring them a message from home, especially to seek out some who in the far country had gone astray. With this in view we had travelled down by the goods' train, so that MacAlpine might have at least one night with them before he hurried on to Bulawayo, where he had trysted to spend the week-end among the boys. Our train was late, and it seemed as if nothing could be done that night, but my friend was not to be daunted. Never was shepherd more zealous in



seeking his sheep. The special objects of his solicitude were Lamek and Mary, a guilty pair who had fled from Bandawé and were known to be in Livingstone.

For a time our search seemed vain, but at length we found some natives by a fire, one of whom knew Lamek and agreed to guide us to his house. As we groped our way after him, by a path leading past some bungalows, we were suddenly confronted by an expanse of white, the unmistakable figure of a man in evening dress. Our guide leaped aside nimbly, and MacAlpine, who followed, not being equally adroit, received a rude thrust that sent him staggering off the path.

"Who are you?" demanded a gruff voice whose owner was haughtily indignant that natives should block his way. It made one's blood boil. My friend, however, with extraordinary restraint, commenced to render the soft answer which turneth away wrath, but, before he had finished a sentence, the swaggerer, finding he had met a white man, pushed past us and made off without a word or sign of apology. Such was our welcome back to civilisation.

A few minutes later we were seated in Lamek's hut. It was a dramatic meeting. Had some wandering Scotsman in the backwoods of America seen the door of his shack open suddenly and reveal the face of the old minister from his native glen, the surprise could not have been greater. Lamek and Mary sat on the floor with averted faces, while earnest, pleading words in their own Chitonga brought back thoughts of home and God. Lamek was visibly affected, and at last laid his head prone on the ground with long, shivering sobs. After a time he raised himself and said, "I will give Mary up".

"And you, Mary?"

Hardly above a whisper came the reply, "I will give him up".

"To-night or never," said their counsellor, and Mary, without another word, lifted the lamp and passed out of her home of sin.

"It is more than can be expected of human nature," I

said, when we had returned to our hotel. "What can he do with the woman on his hands, so far from home?"

But next morning Lamek met us with the light of a great renunciation on his face. Yes, Mary had left him and spent the night with friends in a neighbouring hut. He hoped soon to arrange to send her home to the lake.

At Livingstone we made the acquaintance of some notable people.

Few names in African missionary history are more worthy of honour than that of Cavalieri Louis Jalla, the first colleague of Coillard of the Zambesi. He has grown grey in the service of the native, and his record of work is second only to that of the great Apostle of the Barotse. At the time of our visit he was in charge of the French Mission at Livingstone, though under orders to move up the river to Sesheké, the royal city of the Barotse. Besides his own Barotse congregation and native hospital, he had a little church in the location, where on Sunday a succession of services are held for groups of various tribes, and among them for the Nyasaland boys. While MacAlpine went on to Bulawayo it was arranged that I should spend the week-end in Livingstone, and meet these boys.

On Sunday morning, M. Jalla drove me in his mule buggy to the location, where we arrived at nine o'clock to find a congregation dispersing, and the Nyasaland boys waiting to enter the church. As another service was to follow at ten o'clock we were limited to an hour. A memorable hour it proved to be. There were forty or fifty of the boys present. Lamek was there, and Mary, with a few other women. All understood English more or less, and the hymns were from Sankey's book, chosen by the boys themselves. Nothing could have been more aptly chosen than the opening hymn—

Come every soul by sin oppressed,  
There's mercy with the Lord.

The tears stood in Lamek's eyes and overflowed at the first notes of the hymn. To such an audience, and in such circumstances, one could not but speak with unusual

feeling. The big, hungry eyes of Lamek, and his face quivering with emotion, were almost more than one dared to look upon. At the close of the service we stood around the church door, now filled with another group of worshippers. I took their names, and gave them what news I could of their homes in Nyasaland. I had been bidden inquire for Mateyu Zayamba, another of the flock who had gone astray, and sure enough he was there. When all the others had left, he and Lamek remained. He did not deny nor excuse his sin. Would he not think of repentance after what had been said that day? He looked at me in a straight and manly way, and, with the simplicity so characteristic of the African, he said, "Your words are in my heart now". Both he and Lamek desired me to tell their story to M. Jalla, as it was their wish to be restored to the fellowship of the Christian Church.

In the afternoon I addressed the Barotse congregation, M. Jalla acting as interpreter. There was present that day a notable visitor in the person of Litia, the son and heir of King Lewanika, and now, since his father's death, the first Christian king of Barotseland. Being on his way to Cape Town, he spent the Sunday at Livingstone, and like a good Christian he attended the service. In appearance he is a big, rather stout-built man of quiet manner, with short, pointed beard turning grey, and a face decidedly resembling his father. He was tastefully dressed in a light tweed suit, and wore a magnificent diamond ring and a gold wristlet watch. He conversed familiarly with the local chief and his wife, and chucked their baby under the chin, in the most paternal way. During the service he was accommodated with a seat on the platform, and appeared to join in the worship with devoutness.

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing, as I had occasion to remember that day. Being aware that M. Jalla was rendering my remarks into Sekololo, that is the speech of the Makololo, I took occasion to recall the fact that David Livingstone found in this region his faithful Makololo, and I went on to assure my audience that no African name was dearer to us in the homeland. The interpreter showed

signs of uneasiness, and it is doubtful how much of all this reached the audience.

"It is quite true," explained M. Jalla at the close of the service, "that the Makololo ruled this country in Livingstone's day, and imposed their language on the people. But they are the hereditary enemies of the Barotse, and Litia's grandfather drove them out."

So the little bubble was pricked, and it was my turn to feel small. I had been, as it were, commending myself to a Belgian audience by praise of the Prussian name.

All this memorable Sunday, while these hopeful activities were going on among the natives, there was no religious service of any kind for the white population in Livingstone. As far as outward appearances went they were the most conspicuous heathen. Not only so, but complaint was made that Christian natives were prevented from attending church because they had to carry their master's clubs on the golf-course. O strange irony, that in the town called by Livingstone's name, the African for whose salvation Livingstone died should be hindered in his worship of God by the irreligion of Livingstone's people! What is the value of a faith that can be so utterly forsaken in a foreign land, and where is the spirit of the Home Church, to suffer her far-off sons to be thus neglected?

M. Jalla spoke from long experience, and with full knowledge of the white man's attitude to the native.

"Cruel," he said emphatically. "Not all, some are just and kind, but many are—" he paused for an expression—"ze brute."

He told with indignation of the bands of troopers in the early days, who, by their studied insolence, seemed bent on goading the Barotse into war, even as the Matabele were goaded; he spoke also of subtle agreements by which King Lewanika had been made to barter his kingly rights in ignorance, and afterwards held to a bargain he had never made. All which went to confirm the reports one had heard from Cape Town and onwards, indicating that the history of Rhodesia has yet to be written. A stupendous feat of Empire Building it undoubtedly was, and rough



work has often to be done when foundations are being laid, but the future of the Empire in Africa would be brighter if the past had been more humane.

On leaving Livingstone, about a score of the Nyasaland boys came down in the dusk of the evening to see me off. Mary also came. Lamek pointed her out as she stood a little distance off, and whispered that she was leaving soon for Bandawé in the company of some friends who were returning. When we had all shaken hands Mary came timidly forward to say good-bye. A silent, pathetic figure she looked in the twilight, and as I wrung her hand I could not but pray that, like that other Mary, she might find mercy in God's great day.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE VICTORIA FALLS.

THE Victoria Falls of the Zambesi are seven miles down the river from Livingstone. On nearing the town by train we had seen to the south, across a flat and sparsely-wooded country, the lofty pillars of smoke rising solemnly into the still evening air. The thunder of the falls was, of course, at that distance inaudible, but the appropriateness of the native name, *Mosi-oa-tunya* (the smoke that sounds), was immediately apparent. The cloud exactly resembles the smoke of a great bush fire, and is the most characteristic feature of the place.

Next morning we walked the seven miles down the railway track to the Falls. The smoke pillars rose in front of us, and presently we could detect the deep and awesome sound of the falling water. Leaving the railway we followed a footpath that led to the river bank. The broad bosom of the Zambesi was sprinkled with wooded islands, among which the blue water floated peacefully and all unconscious of its impending fate. The path passed behind a clump of trees and then suddenly brought us to the brink of the chasm.

A single glance into the abyss cut my breath with the sheer awe of the sight. "God Almighty!" I breathed in amazement to myself. It seemed the only adequate expression to one's feelings at the moment, and even now there seems nothing more to be said than just that, "Almighty God, what hast Thou wrought?" Imagine, if you can, a mile-long chasm, less than 100 yards wide and 400 feet deep, with a mile-wide river pouring over the whole of one side in cataract beyond cataract, the tortured and imprisoned

water boiling and raging at the bottom of the chasm, dashing itself to pieces against the opposing rock, filling the whole air with the sweat and steam of its agony, and finally bursting out through a mere crack in the rock of 100 feet in width.

I was roused by my friend making the fatuous remark, "Isn't it awfully pretty?" These were his very words. "Look at that spray," he continued, "and the colouring on that rock. Man, you don't enjoy it half so much unless you have somebody with you." But presently he fell silent, and then his inspiration came. In a hushed and quiet voice he said, "The Lord sitteth King at the Flood". It was fitly spoken, for in truth the Lord sitteth King at that flood.

It is very difficult, without a diagram, to give a clear idea of the extraordinary configuration of the Falls. The surrounding country is flat, or rather saucer-shaped, with no features of ruggedness or grandeur. The Zambesi, flowing placidly through this plain, suddenly drops 400 feet sheer down into the bowels of the earth, and then zigzags wildly through a narrow gorge like a subterranean snake. This amazing fissure is exactly as if a flash of forked lightning had fallen full length on the plain and split the rock to a depth of 400 feet, after the pattern of its own jagged and angular form. Or, to use another image, one might imagine some giant plunging a knife in and slicing clean across the mile-wide channel of the river, then turning the knife at right angles to the original cut and slashing the rock in a fierce zigzag to let the sunken river out.

The shape of the gorge might perhaps be roughly indicated in the following way. Write together the letters *FW*. Erase the top of the *F* and join the *W* to the end of the middle cross-bar. Then, if the general flow of the river above the falls be from left to right along the line of type, the upright line of the *F* would represent the mile-long chasm into which the river drops, the cross-bar of the *F* would represent the narrow outlet by which the river escapes, and the sharp zigzags of the *W* the shape of the deep gorge down which it rushes. This is no exaggeration of the angular course of the river below the falls, for the

cliffs at the bends are sharp as the edge of a chisel, and the river literally doubles back on itself again and again. The railway crosses the gorge just below the bend where the *F* and *W* join. The Falls Hotel stands overlooking the first angle of the *W*, so that from the veranda one gets a magnificent double view of the gorge, up the one arm to the bridge and down the other, with the great chisel-edged cliff between.

To visit the different view-points in and around the Falls is a matter of days; to attempt a description of them requires some hardihood. Almost every feature of the scene has a certain incomparable quality, a uniqueness of majesty that baffles language.

The river itself above the Falls is a noble sight. "No one," says Livingstone, "can imagine the beauty of the scene from anything witnessed in England." The banks are fringed with gigantic reeds and grasses whose white feathery tops stand out with exquisite clearness and beauty against the deep blue water. The river gently glides among scores of wooded islands, floating over placid stretches, sleeping in sunny pools, rippling round the rocks, till in an instant it drops from the edge of the precipice and is dashed to atoms in the abyss below. The catastrophe comes with utter suddenness. Near the western bank, where the edge of the precipice is broken away, there is a fierce downward rush before the leap, but elsewhere, so level is the top of the rock and so sharp its edge, that the river, peaceful to the last, is as suddenly engulfed as if the earth had opened her mouth and swallowed it up.

The edge of the Falls, which is about a mile and a furlong in length, is divided in the middle by Livingstone Island, from which the great explorer got his first view of the chasm. On either side of this island the river is again broken into two by smaller islands, thus making four distinct Falls. Between Livingstone Island and the left bank are the Rainbow and the East Falls, between the island and the right bank are the Main Fall and the Devil's Cataract.

Livingstone compares the snow-white sheet of falling



water to "myriads of small comets rushing on in one direction, each of which left behind its nucleus rays of foam". This very accurately describes the appearance. The water does not fall in a solid mass, but in an endless succession of fiery leaps. Snow-white jets of water rush downward, each leaving for an instant a track of fleecy foam. In watching these one gets an impression of airy lightness, and yet they are, in reality, ponderous masses of solid water. A stone dropped from the railway bridge struck the water in seven seconds, and in exactly the same number of seconds, as nearly as one could compute, these apparently fleecy comets of foam made their descent.

The chasm into which the river drops is simply a gigantic fissure in the rock, a crack running clean across the river bed from bank to bank, and, though over a mile long, less than 100 yards in width. Facing the falls, therefore, there is a twin precipice, unbroken from end to end save at one point, opposite the middle of the Rainbow Fall, where it is cut through to let the river out. This Iron Gate, as it may well be called, is only 100 feet wide, and through it the whole volume of the water, flowing in from both ends of the chasm, rushes with inconceivable fury—a mile-wide river compressed into a mere bottle neck of 100 feet.

It is this opposing precipice which creates the wonderful smoke pillars. If the space in front of the Falls were open the spray would fly outwards and hang over the river as at Niagara. But here the spray, flying outwards, is instantly dashed against the opposing cliff and pulverised into steam, which is shot up hundreds of feet into the air. It is an almost miraculous transformation. In seven seconds the water plunges down into a hopeless abyss of destruction, in seven seconds more it is floating in the sky, rainbow-crowned.

The view down into the chasm from either end is indescribable. Perhaps no scene in the world better deserves the epithet sublime. Vast masses of white vapour roll and boil upward, while the river thunders and plunges down. Through this tossing veil of spray one catches dim and fearful glimpses of an abyss of writhing water, green and white, lashing about frantically, rolling inward and heaping

up towards the Iron Gate. The most exquisite rainbows hang above the chasm, tingeing the steam cloud and painting the dark rocks. Never to be seen twice in the same position, for they continually change with the movement of the sun and the spectator's standpoint. Sometimes a perfect circle appears, the under arc sweeping down gloriously into the heart of the abyss, and gilding its agony with a heavenly radiance.

It is said that at the end of the dry season, when the river is at its lowest, it is sometimes possible to see from end to end of the chasm, and therefore this season should be chosen for a visit. For my part I had no wish to see through to the end. Rather would I peer into an impenetrable depth and feel it had no end. The sense of mystery and infinitude is fed as much by what is hidden as by what is revealed.

The cliff that faces the Falls is unbroken save by the narrow outlet through which the river escapes. The break occurs about a fourth of the distance from the east end of the chasm. Between it and the east end the cliff, while perpendicular on the side next the Falls, breaks away behind into a deep ravine, leaving merely a wall of rock so narrow that only the foolhardy attempt to pass along the Knife Edge as it is called. The other three-quarters of the cliff, however, is broad and flat on top, and provides, in fact, Nature's Grand Stand, from which the various cataracts can be viewed in detail. Along its edge runs a belt of trees to which the name of the Rain Forest is aptly given. Here the trees glisten with perpetual moisture, and round their roots maiden-hair ferns grow luxuriously, for over the forest the lofty steam-clouds rise, and, as they sway in the air, shower down upon it now a fine drizzle, next moment a drenching rain. One must be clad in the stoutest of waterproof before venturing along the path through the forest.

Opposite the Main Fall the top of the rock for twenty yards back from the edge is washed absolutely bare. A torrential downpour beats upon it ceaselessly. Here, perhaps, is the one spot on earth where it has rained continuously for ages, and the contrast is very striking, with

luxuriant vegetation and tropical sunshine only a few yards away. Looking across this barren strip of black glistening rock, vast clouds of steam can be seen shooting upwards with tremendous velocity, and out of the heart of the cloud comes the solemn thunder of the Falls. By and by, if one bides one's time and is content to be drenched, there will come a crowning moment when, through a rift in the cloud, there flashes out a dazzling vision of the sun shining on the snow-white falling water. It vanishes on the instant, but the impression left is indelible. The spectator feels as if Nature had unveiled for him, in a moment of high privilege, her heavenliest sight.

Thus it is possible to pass along the front of the Falls, pausing at each new view-point, with probably a rainbow advancing in front or following behind, till the extremity of the cliff is reached at Danger Point, the western pillar of the Iron Gate. Far below the tortured river is gushing out, squeezed into less than a fiftieth of its former width, the most tremendous mill-race in the world.

Hardly less unique than the Falls is the gorge down which the river now flows, with its wild, delirious zigzag, its 400 feet of sheer precipice on either hand, and the imprisoned water boiling in between. Never was river so battered, twisted and torn. A hundred yards from the opening it dashes into the opposing cliff, is flung off at right-angles, and swirls away furiously below the railway bridge. For half a mile it careers down the gorge as straight as an arrow, then it suddenly turns at an acute angle and rushes back till it is opposite the bridge again, with a mere wedge of cliff between. Again it turns as sharply as before, and thus it staggers along in a bewildered, drunken way for forty miles.

In the visitors' book at the Falls Hotel some traveller from New York had written, the week before my visit, "Seen Victoria, put Niagara to auction". Another American, with more exuberant rhetoric, was said to have described Niagara as "a bead of perspiration on Nature's brow after she had made Victoria". Such remarks, of course, are not to be taken seriously. They are in a tone

of characteristic exaggeration, with perhaps a tinge of annoyance at the eclipse of America's glory. Few, however, who have seen both Falls will deny that the Zambesi far surpasses its American rival. For those who are impressed by sheer magnitude it may be noted that while Niagara is 168 feet high, the Victoria Falls are 400 feet ; and while Niagara is 1000 yards broad, the Victoria Falls are nearly 2000. But the difference cannot be expressed in mere terms of magnitude. The Niagara Falls, grand as they are, answer pretty closely to expectation ; the Victoria Falls exceed and confound expectation. Moreover, owing to the unique formation of the rock, they can be examined more minutely, and are displayed to far better advantage than Niagara.

But, in truth, one is in no mood for comparisons. Feelings of wonder and reverence silence criticism, and a visit to the Falls insensibly becomes an act of devotion. One receives profound impressions of infinite mystery and power, mystery of fathomless abyss and impenetrable cloud, power of river and rock, power of furious titanic action restrained and controlled by the diviner power of absolute repose. Above, below and around, the air pulses with the resounding thunder of the Falls. It would be quite wrong to call it a roar. It is not harsh or deafening, but most restful and musical—a solemn, all-pervading fullness of sound, deep organ tones that make not the air only, but the solid ground, vibrate rhythmically, and send a soft hush far off into the distant woods. The whole place is one of nature's grandest temples. The smoke-pillars rise up as from some great sacrificial altar. The rainbow suspended above the abyss may well seem, as it seemed to Livingstone, "a type of Him who sits supreme, alone unchangeable, though ruling over all changing things," and, one may venture to add, a type of Him "whose tender mercies are over all his works," even the most awful and terrible.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE BOYS ON THE MINES.

THE general character of Rhodesia is that of an immense undulating plateau, from 3000 to 5000 feet in height. South of the Zambesi the bush dwindles to mere scrub, and then gives place to the open veldt. The aspect of the country is bare and featureless until the edge of the plateau is reached to the east of Salisbury, when it breaks away and descends rapidly through the most fantastic rock scenery to Portuguese East Africa.

Over all this dry and dusty plain, white men are scattered in search of gold and a home. Hither also come the natives from the north, recruited by the Labour Bureau, and lured by glowing rumours that have reached their villages and glimpses they have had of the finery that gold can buy. Here black and white meet, and together constitute the problem of the boys on the mines. Strangely enough, in our other colonies and in America, the word boy is a name of honour, expressive of vigorous young manhood, and the boys on the mines and in the lumber-camps of the West are the pride of the Empire and the Church's first care. But here, on the contrary, in presence of an inferior race, the name boy has been degraded and become a name of servitude. The boys are the natives, and they are supposed to constitute the sole problem. It seems to be forgotten that the whites also are boys, many in the first flush of youth, and they constitute a moral problem as grave and momentous as the other, and one that ought to lie nearer to the Church's heart.

As soon as we struck the railway and came south, it was

easy to see that the native was spoiled. Loafing about the towns and railway stations, dressed in the cast-off clothes of the white man, he appeared a most unattractive creature. He seemed to have lost all his simplicity, and acquired the fine art of being cheeky and intensely provoking. When, moreover, one saw the white-washed and corrugated-iron vulgarity of the mine compound, and tried to conduct a Sunday service amid the roaring din of a location, then one thought with intense longing of the primitive villages in the forest and the friendly dwellers there. The Doctor, seated by the camp-fire, surrounded by a ring of devoted carriers, and a white gaffer cursing a gang of native labourers, formed two scenes which hardly appeared to belong to the same world.

Yes, the native is spoiled, there can be no doubt about that. But if the question of responsibility is raised, it is not the Gospel but civilisation that must bear the blame. Spoiled by the missionary is the cry. Alas, it is but too true. Africa is overrun by missionaries—missionaries of empire and of industry, missionaries who preach a gospel of gold, of racial pride, of fleshly lust; and these, having laboured in their blindness, turn and curse the fruit of their own handiwork. One would not dream of making the charge universal, for notable experiences to the contrary are on record. "I have natives working for me," writes one whose witness is of the greatest weight, "natives who have not worked elsewhere, who have been in my service from twenty to twenty-five years, and who are to-day as respectful, trustworthy, and altogether dependable as ever they were. On one occasion the absence of the family in Europe extended to two and a half years, and all the household possessions left open, the natives in charge accounted for everything to the smallest detail." Yet, on the whole, it remains true that the native is spoiled by contact with the white man, and the white man in contact with the native shows at his worst.

We travelled east from Bulawayo to Salisbury and Beira, dropping off to pay flying visits to the mines where Nyasaland boys were known to be most numerous. To

these boys the sight of my friend's face was like water to thirsty ground. It was good to see how they ran to greet him on our arrival, and how loth they were to let him go. The aspect and conditions of life are much the same on all the mines, so the record of a single visit may suffice.

We leave the train at a wayside station and book rooms at a very humble wooden hotel. There are no other houses near, but the buildings of the mine are visible about a mile away. Our rooms are at the back of the house, and as we pass the kitchen window the cook rushes out in great excitement.

"Hullo, Tadeyu," MacAlpine exclaims in astonishment. "Where in the world have you come from?"

Then follows an animated conversation in Chitonga. Tadeyu, for many years the trusty cook at Ekwendeni, explains that he had come south while the Stuarts were on furlough. Now that he is informed of their return his instant resolve is to give in his warning and get home to his friends. We walk towards the mine, sinking ankle deep at every step in the softest of dust. Two or three native stores are ranged along the way, each with a miscellaneous selection of goods calculated to suit native taste. Invariably at the door there is a lofty pile of painted tin boxes, such as the mine boys buy to hold their treasures. The first proceeding of the new-comer is to purchase a box, of which, unless the price is paid in full, only the key is handed to him. From time to time he makes fresh purchases of whatever takes his fancy—articles of clothing, brown boots, a melodion, etc. These are deposited in the box, and become the spoils of civilisation with which in due season he returns to his village.

The compound resembles a gigantic stackyard. It consists of a dozen rows of circular, corrugated-iron huts, with twenty to thirty huts in the row. The whole is swept bare and clean, and has all the monotonous symmetry of a cattle pen. As we pass through among the huts, we meet two or three Nyasaland boys who show us the office of the compound manager, to whom it is our first business

to report ourselves. He happens to be a Scotsman, a well-built young fellow, who is quite cordial, but evidently finds some difficulty in understanding the purpose of our visit. He shows us round his stores, and laughs over the difficulty of feeding his big family. Then he takes us to a little hospital for the mine workers, where most of the beds are full, principally with phthisis cases. Here is a Bandawé boy, who would give all the gold in Rhodesia for one glimpse of the blue lake he will never see again. His eye glistens at the sight of his old friend and teacher, and words of Christian comfort pass between the two in the soft speech of the Tonga.

A church of very humble proportions stands in the middle of the compound. There is, of course, no settled minister, but night after night the Christian natives meet for prayer and Bible reading. Here too they conduct a night school. A meeting is hastily arranged for the evening when the boys come off their shift. The little meeting-house is packed at the appointed hour. Mac-Alpine presides and introduces the Deputy, who briefly conveys to these exiles the greetings of the mother Church, and then makes way for his more capable and experienced friend. The man from the lake pours on out of a full heart, till one wonders whether he will emulate the Apostle who continued his speech until midnight, and whether, if he does, there will be a Eutychus among those eager listeners. At last he finishes, and numbers of the audience crowd round him to press his hand and to get and give all the news. Being obviously out of it, I stroll through the compound where the dull rumble of drums has been proclaiming some festivity. On reaching the spot, groups of men and women can be seen in the bright starlight gathered round an open space among the huts. Suddenly I receive a heavy blow upon the shoulder, and a figure like a draped horse goes spinning past. It runs on silently, pirouettes, and runs on again. It charges first one group and then another, wheeling and running nimbly, but though there is laughter and shrieks from the women, nobody seems greatly frightened. I wait to see if the



mysterious creature will come my way again, but it does not, and I conclude that our collision has been accidental.

Returning to the hotel we found our company at dinner to consist of a gentleman in his shirt sleeves, who was entitled doubtless to be called a white man by virtue of his birth, but whose hands and face did little to support that claim. With him we had an amusing encounter, and one has a vivid recollection of him as the critic of the unwashed hands. Evidently he detected the cloven hoof of the missionary, for he opened fire at once.

"Every native is a liar and a thief," he asserted, with fierce dogmatism.

At that moment Tadeyu came in from the kitchen and glanced brightly in our direction. My friend turned to the critic.

"Now," he said, with quiet reasonableness, "what do you know about the boy who cooked this dinner for us?"

"I know he is a liar and a thief," came the sneering answer.

MacAlpine's eyes flashed at this insult to his friend, but I interposed to suggest that a man who talked like that was not to be argued with, but only to be laughed at. We proceeded with our dinner while the critic continued his harangue. Not a single good quality had the native in his original state, and now, in addition, every possible evil quality had been grafted on to him by the missionary. The climax of enormity was reached when the missionary taught the natives to play tennis, and took the hard-earned money of poor working people at home to provide them with tennis-rackets. This astonishing statement we greeted with laughter so long and hearty that the critic fell silent, and we finished our meal in peace.

It would, of course, be unfair to regard our critic of the unwashed hands as representative, yet one met everywhere ominous signs of the same dense ignorance and invincible prejudice. At times, too, one heard the same passionate abuse. The colonial mind is enmity against Missions. The subject is regarded as one not to be calmly considered, but to be dismissed with contempt. The colonial is a

splendidly fine fellow, but if there is one subject about which he is in abysmal ignorance it is Missions. It may be said with perfect confidence that not one in a thousand of colonials has ever examined the operations of even a single Mission station. Missionaries have their weaknesses and Mission methods their faults, but the colonial has not discovered them. His attack is delivered in the dark. He fires wildly without stopping to get the range, and so, when he is firmly met, he is never able to push the attack home. His attitude to Missions is, in fact, simply a phobia which seizes the raw tenderfoot on his first entrance to the country, and diminishes in violence with age and experience.

There were times when the irreligion of the whites struck the mind more painfully than the heathenism of the blacks. One has seen amid the gross surroundings of the compound a little school where natives, after their day's work, were laboriously learning and teaching one another to read. One has stood also beside a pretty church overlooking a valley in which 200 whites have their home, but where the preacher, when he comes for a monthly service, has sometimes looked in vain for a single fellow-worshipper.

What shape will the future take out there where the boys, black and white, mingle together on the mines? It is a dubious question. It may be the Church will awake to her full responsibility, and seek with shepherd's care her far-scattered and neglected sons. It may be that the slow discipline of the years will in time effect a cure. For life in a young colony, full as it is of zest and vigour, is in reality unnatural and morally unhealthy, inasmuch as it lacks the due proportions of the home, the frailty of age, and the innocence of childhood to soften the passions of the strong. But how ardently did one wish that all that splendid strength and daring which has responded to the dream of Empire were consecrated to a diviner vision and poured out with the same lavishness for the Redeemer's kingdom.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE SHADOW OF THE GREAT WAR.

WE sailed from Beira on the fateful 1st of August, hoping to come home by Egypt and Italy. Travelling down country we had heard vague rumours of trouble in Europe, but had not taken them seriously, and now we sailed without misgiving. Next day we lay off Chindé, and the German tug came out as usual. Another day's sail up the coast, and we saw the morning sun shining on the old grey castle of Mozambique. Only when we sailed hurriedly out of Port Amelia that night with all lights out did we begin to suspect the truth. Fetching a wide sweep to the east to avoid Dar-es-Salaam and the German coast, we came into Zanzibar round the north end of the island.

News of the declaration of war came to us somewhat dramatically. We had gone ashore and hired an Arab guide to take us through the maze of the town. Passing through one of the streets he paused and said, "Germain's consul's house". In the interest of viewing the palm-fringed roadstead and the Sultan's palace, we had forgotten Germany for the moment, but the guide's words recalled our minds. Ah, what about war?

"Yees, war," said the guide eagerly, and led us to the corner where we could see the Union Jack flying over the consulate. "Germain flag down, Breetish flag up, zees morning." We took it for a word of good omen.

Zanzibar must be the most chaotic city in the world. The worthy Scots bailie who insisted that every house must be "paralysed wi' the road," would find here much to grieve his honest soul. The building of the city was on

this wise. The first builder, being demented or drunk, threw down a building anyhow; the second threw down another in utter contempt of the first, and the rest followed each at his own angle and in his own style. At last came a builder who thought to make an end of the lunatic performance by blocking the end of the street. Not quite succeeding in his attempt, he left a narrow exit through which one squeezes to find another mad rout of architecture round the corner. The whole is a "maze of corridors contrived for sin," where the cruel East fastened on Africa and sucked her life's blood in the old slave days.

We visited the Universities' Mission and stood in the cathedral church, the chancel end of which is built on the site of the old slave market. Near the church is the Mission hospital, beautiful with palms and tropical plants, but breathless as a hothouse. The doctor showed us one ward empty, and dressings laid ready on the surgery table.

"It is well to be prepared," he said. "We might get in a batch of wounded at any moment."

One remembered his words and blessed his forethought when, shortly afterwards, the *Pegasus* was pounded to pieces in Zanzibar harbour, and her helpless crew decimated.

Returning on board we found a scene of agitation and confusion. The Indians who had joined us to go up the coast were ordered ashore; the Mombasa passengers, of whom there were fifty or sixty, were informed more vaguely that they were at liberty to leave the ship. The Indians, with characteristic meekness obeyed; the British, also true to national character, stormed and protested. They interviewed the captain, and demanded to know his intentions, but they might as well have interviewed the Sphinx. They held an indignation meeting and appointed a committee, to deal, presumably, with the World War as it affected them! Amateur sea lawyers expounded the situation. "They are bound to take us to our destination. They can't allow me to starve. I'm a British subject." British subjects, apparently, had never been known to starve. Finally they decided to stick to the ship.

We sailed out of the harbour at dusk, escorted by the



*Pegasus* and the *Hyacinth*, which, after seeing us well out on the ocean, returned to their post of duty. All night we rushed eastward towards India. In the morning the course was altered and we headed south. The deck hands were sent up to paint out the colours of the ship, beginning at the top of the funnels. By day we raced along over a wide sea vacant of shipping, and at night the darkened liner loomed up eerily like some careering monster of the deep. We had taken on board the German consul of Zanzibar, and when Sunday came round and the purser was reviewing the praise list chosen for the service, he gently took exception to the choice of the national anthem as the closing hymn. The captain, he said, did not absolutely forbid it, but the singing of it might hurt the consul's feelings! Such was British ferocity at the beginning of the war. Ere another Sunday came round we had reached the conclusion that it would hurt our feelings more *not* to sing it. So it was sung. After that the ship's band took their courage in both hands and played it, and we heard no more of the German consul's feelings.

We found Durban aflame with loyalty. Almost every building in the city was flying the Union Jack, at least a third of them upside down. So unconscious of Empire were we, so unused to any parade of it in the dreamy old pre-war days that we hardly knew how to fly our own flag. Colonial troops were drilling on the race-course, and above them on the barracks waved a big Union Jack, also upside down. It was more than patriotism could stand. Greatly daring, we approached the sentry, and with profuse apologies drew his attention to the fact. He did not put his bayonet through us, but listened with the interest of novelty while we pointed out how the red stripe should run.

At Durban our boat became the mail home by the Cape, the regular boats having been commandeered to carry troops. Our friends the passengers to Mombasa were put ashore, this time without option. Their confident hopes of boarding in a first-class hotel at the company's expense, till they could resume their journey, now collapsed, and

they were left to shift for themselves. It was a real hardship and loss to those who suffered it, yet as little to be regarded in war time as a broken finger in a railway disaster. The boat filled up and we had a great send-off. French reservists were the centre of interest. Two priests were cheered by crowds of native children from their Mission school. A portly Frenchman, whose girth one reflected afterwards would somewhat incommode him in trench warfare, was much made of by his friends. They presented him with a flag, embraced, kissed, and cheered him. With the dramatic instinct of a Frenchman he rose to the occasion, and as we sailed out of the harbour his friends had a last sight of him standing in a noble pose upon the deck with the tricolour floating over him.

At Cape Town we were packed to the last cabin. A motley throng. Stewards and musicians from the commandeered liners, now rapidly filling up with troops at the quay; two or three music-hall companies whose engagements had been cancelled; Belgians going home on furlough from the Congo, all unsuspecting the fate of their unhappy country; Americans and other foreigners turned off the last mail-boat which had taken only British passengers. Again the minor miseries of the war were brought to view. Two very tearful little schoolgirls came on board. They had sailed from England for their home in the Canary Islands, but in the first alarm of war their boat had rushed straight on to the Cape. Now they were being taken back to England and to school with never a holiday nor glimpse of home. In the big world-sorrow they had their tiny share.

The voyage from the Cape was uneventful, as the sea by this time was fairly clear of enemy ships. The wireless tingled steadily, but no news reached the passengers. We had no serious anticipations, and life on board ship was never gayer. Indeed the authority of the captain had to be exercised to keep some wild spirits within the bounds of decency. Yet there were a few who met daily to intercede. One remembers gratefully the prayer of an American mother for the boys at the front, "some of

whom may be falling in battle even as we speak". The words fell with a heavy sound on our ears. The thing seemed hardly possible, yet it was a true instinct, for these were the days of Belgium's agony and the retreat from Mons.

As we neared England the truth crashed upon us. A wireless message was posted up announcing that the Germans were on the Marne. To most of us the Marne was then but a name, but the French reservists went frantic. Horrible visions seized them of Paris besieged and fallen ere ever they could come to her help. They were like to tear themselves in their impotence.

At last the six weeks' voyage ended, and we sailed into Plymouth Sound. Not without emotions of new-born love and pride, we watched the swift destroyers cutting through the water and the captive German vessels lying at anchor. We feasted our eyes hungrily on the green hills above the town. Never had our native land appeared so dear. "Old England," I seemed to discover in a moment all the music of that noble name. A patriotic Scot, I claimed it as mine and exulted in it. How foolish seemed the domestic jealousy of Scots and English! Let Ephraim no more envy Judah, and Judah cease to vex Ephraim. Is it not all one glorious island home?

In a few hours we were travelling swiftly past the green lanes of Devonshire, admiring the rich verdure of well-tilled fields, and realising, as every returning traveller does, that there is no country like the dear homeland.

"And to think," said my friend, suddenly waking up from the long dream of darkest Africa, "that in all these fields and woods there is not a lion nor a snake."









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